TALES OF LIFE AND DEATH.

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TALES OF LIFE AND DEATH.

BY THE

HON. GRANTLEY F. BERKELEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE LADY GRACE.

THE LADY GRACE.

CHAPTER I.

It will be remembered by some of my readers, that in a former work of mine, and in the last page of the second volume of "The Upper Ten Thousand," we left the further narration of this story and took leave of the Master of Beverstone and the Lady Grace at a time when they had *never* met. They were living the existence of the inner life made by themselves, the truth and beauty, implicit faith and trust of which had impressed a religious belief in both their souls, that on earth they had really found a heaven, or, in deference to the stricter, or more mundane methods of speech, a haven, in which their hearts might anchor, never again to swing with the changing tides of mortality, nor to be rocked, and perhaps wrecked, by the breaking billows and shoals of the world's wide sea. Wide, from the very excessive range of its restlessness, and watery from the ceaseless flow of tears that hour by hour, minute by minute, in one place or the other,

never cease to fall from the clouded skies of sorrow, but, like Tennyson's river, "still go on for ever."

And had they remained thus apart, in the dreamy bliss of their self-made lives, would *that* have sufficed for their happiness? Would the inner life have had strength sufficient to have withstood the innuendos of the envious, the jealous, the mean-souled, false detractor who lurks in every path, a venomous snake without so much as the warning "rattle" to give notice of a mischievous intention? No, as a trustful historian I do not believe it would, for divesting fact of each poetic line, I must admit that appropriation *is* the desire of all true love, and with the Muse of Moore I think that any "image of friendship," or platonic affection, taken away by any "youthful adorer" to ornament her "temple," would very soon be "so cold and so dull," that she would return to the "sculptor," and apply to him for some other of more genial expression.

There are a million imps of malice, who seize on the brooding brains of severed lovers, to knead the seeds of distrust into the leaven of severance, and to render what was simply sad an unendurable agony. High up in midnight's cloudless summer sky, *there* reigns the moon, "to be seen by him and her. They perhaps are looking at it together!" "We," whispers the poisoning voice of some airy fiend, and who are "*we?*" *he may* have some one seated at *his* side, not you and *they* may be look-

ing at it together. Have *you* the folly to think him more constant than other men, constant to charms the true delights of which have never been revealed to him, and therefore cannot by any common sense be supposed to hold him *by favourable contrast in captivity?*

Such baneful thoughts as these *will intrude* on the mind of either sex, as the letter from Lady Grace in page 417 in the last chapter of the second volume of "The Upper Ten Thousand," has shown, wherein she says, "That night, my usually even spirits left me, and there seemed around my pillow some strange boding sense of evil about to happen to you." Some evil sprite had then interrupted her "usual spirit," by the suggestion "of impending danger," and when those who really and truly love each other, are apart, there are legions of intangible thoughts, light as thistle-down and impalpable until they settle, ready to come with any idle breath of air and mar all mental rest.

It was not thus, though, with the Lady Grace, nor with the Master of Beverstone; on either mind there was not the semblance of distrust nor jealous feeling, yet still for all that, the wish to see, to be near each other kept growing fast, and with the free interchange of sentiment came the desire for the meeting, and to have the silvery and more delicate pencillings on the picture of the inner life indelibly engraved on the proof print of reality, and fastened in every touch, that if not thus

fixed, might have flown away, and escaped for ever from the frame.

The desire to see each other and to meet grew on, and the Master of Beverstone wrote to the Lady Grace as follows. We need not trace him through every line; it is enough to give that portion of his letter which tended most to bring about an interview, and to raise a storm:—

"And are we ever to be kept thus apart, and am I never to hear that dear voice, nor see, nor touch the lips that have in the writing of the hand, told me such sweet things? If you say that I may do so, I will come to you, but until I know by what difficulties you may be surrounded, I feel as if in irons, chained from any deed of daring, fearing that by some over-rashness I may cause you discomfort, and than do that, I would sooner die. 'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.' I do not assume to be angelic in any way, yet I think of no other interest than yours; and I would forego life itself if I thought it was for your better happiness: tell me, tell me, then, do you see any chance of 'summer' coming to 'the long winter of my discontent,' and is there any promise of a speedy meeting? The hawk that feels the falconer's hand on his hood, to give him to wing and eye, is not more longing for the flight than I am, nor is the 'gaze-hound' pulling at 'the slips' more eager for the

cheering view; tell me, then, tell me my own trusting, faithful, faultless love, is there a chance of a speedy meeting?"

In answer to this letter, the Lady Grace wrote as follows:—

"You will think I have been neglectful in having left your last dear letter so long unanswered, but, for the first time since the beginning of our strange acquaintance, I have not known how to write to you. You have so suddenly, as it were, broken new ground, and opened out before me possibilities *created by your wishes*, that I am a little troubled and perplexed.

"Your earnest desire is, then, that we should meet? I might have expected that it would be so; for is it not in the nature of men to prefer the real to the ideal?—To run the risk of disenchantment rather than not test fully the value of what they believe to be a precious jewel? Far away, out of reach of their eager hand, the jewel *may* sparkle with a million dazzling lights; but when within their grasp it *may* prove only a dull, lustreless, rayless stone!

"Face to face, you and I have never met; but in the mysterious communion of the inner life we have known each other, and we have loved with a pure and perfect love. Not a thought of my heart has been hidden from you; I have rested *my* weakness on *your* strength

with even a more implicit faith than is usual in my trustful sex, and I think—I hope that my affection and faith have been returned in full. Why, then, since we *are* so happy, will you not rest contented? How can you tell, in the words of one of my favourite songs, 'who can tell' what bitter disappointment our meeting *may* give to *you?* You expect so much, you will find so little. How can you tell that the lips will be as eloquent as you fondly say the hand has been? Or that the face and form you have idealised with all a lover's poetic fancy will possess any charms for your eyes? I know what I am, and I know how fastidious is *your* taste.

"But I must be truthful, as I ever am with you, and I have now to confess that sometimes the wish to see you as others see you, to meet you in the familiar intercourse of daily life *is mine also,* and I am *vain* enough to hope that I might be able to win your love as a woman as I have won it in the fair world of fancy. Why should I be ashamed to confess that to be to you the first and dearest object in life *is* my highest ambition; but I should be *the* first and dearest. You have called me your 'faultless love,' but you have yet to learn the jealous, exacting nature you think so highly of. Your fancy might stray, as men's fancies *will,* you know, far and wide. It would not pain me, though, if in your sight other women were fairer and more bright, if your love—*the real love of your heart*—

your *liking*, and your *confidence* were given *to me alone*—if your truest, highest pleasure in this world *came from me*. I care not upon whom your eyes look softly, if they had a still softer lustre when they turned to *me*, nor to whom you spoke tenderly, if your voice was still more tender when it addressed me; so now you know something of the faithfulness I shall require from one to whom I know I could give, were he to ask it, life itself. I know, I feel, that at our meeting, come when it may, my love will pass with the swiftness of the lightning's flash from the calm and safe serenity of the inner life to the distracting doubts and fears and restless longings of the love which *will* have *all* or *nothing*; and then the fear arises, 'perhaps that intensity of love would not find an echo in his heart!' therefore I shrink from our meeting, I repress the desire for more unrestrained communion; I tell myself that it is better and wiser not to change imagination into memory, not to displace the happy thoughts which now companion my waking hours, and haunt my dreams, with an army of vain and poignant regrets. I may be happy in a delusion, but *can that* be a delusion which makes me happy?

"But even as I write my hopes and fears, even as I confess how I long for, yet shrink from, a meeting, I have a presentiment that the parallel lines in which our lives have hitherto ran, side by side, as it were, are about to cross and to recross, to be blended and lost in

each other, but whether for joy or for sadness, time will show.

"Tell me,—I know that you are a sportsman, a mighty horseman, and a man without reproach or fear,—but do you go to London for its season?—to its dinner-parties, and its balls? or are you led away to salmon rivers at home and abroad, or to sea in a yacht with a roving commission? I should like to know if there was any chance of our meeting in the event of my coming to London; but I warn you that should fate bring us suddenly face to face I shall make no sign of recognition, *although I shall know you. You* only know me as the Lady Grace, and from, perhaps, a far too highly coloured picture, pencilled by your heated imagination. The 'inner life,' in which we are so closely united, and the breaking up of the sweet vagueness of which I so much dread, will be discreetly hidden from *your* outward vision, as from the world, under the mask of gay words and smiles which you, in the event of our thus meeting, shall see me shower equally upon all. Yes, I may probably be near you when you think I am far away. I shall have an intense desire to see with my own eyes your bearing in society; you know I have heard much of you, but you also know that I have put *the instincts* of my own heart far above all hearsay evidence for or against you; but if the day should ever come when I am obliged to say, 'He is not worthy of my trust,' the whole fabric of my earthly happiness will

be shivered; and for myself? The world will be to me as if you were not in it, and I 'should hate the sun if it could shine upon a world that held not you.'

"Your own faithful and devoted

"GRACE.

"P.S. It may be that when you read this letter, you too will think it is wiser not to press for a meeting with one who gives such warning of a jealous nature; if this is so, do not hesitate to tell me; in the sweet, poetic life of the spirit, in which passion has no place, I shall still be yours."

It was in the spring of the year when the Master of Beverstone received this letter, and London was filling fast, when, thinking that by the tenor of her communication the Lady Grace but pointed to that emporium of all that was gay, wise, and foolish, as the possible or probable place of meeting, he at once wrote to her as follows. As hitherto, I shall not follow him through his entire letter, but select only such passages as may tend to elucidate subsequent proceedings:—

"Then, Grace, my own sweet Grace, come to London in the end of June. I ask but to know the month of your arrival, and as, of course, you will go where I go, in spite of your cruel resolve not to make yourself known, my inner life will prompt me to your presence, and among hundreds, in a wilderness of flowers, my

soul will select the sweeter altar for its homage, and face to face at last we shall look upon each other! You seek to scare me by your proclaimed jealousy, but there is no real love without the wish to utterly possess. Jealousy, depicted in the garb you give, is no unworthy feeling, no sentiment derived from a stained or unworthy source, depreciating to both the suspector and the suspected; it is the natural sun-tint of the sky, which, at break of day, in softened and roseate hue, proclaims the advance of the cloudless lord in all his sultry power. The god of light, shorn of his beams, would shroud in an eclipse, and love, *without the jealousy you claim*, would be but a cold and maudlin sentiment, such as that in which cottage girls may seek for 'company.'

"A meanly jealous man or woman, jealous for ever, and never with a cause, is, in my opinion, the worst apology for the human race that crawls in the light of day. Like the trout in the fable gifted with the knowledge or suspicion of a net, a man in this miserable phase of life, is ever branding the woman, unhappily thrown into his hands, with the ideal faults she really never had committed. The feeling you describe is not akin to jealousy such as this; the warning as to your 'jealous nature' scares me not at all, nor does it make me for a moment think, ''twould be wiser not to meet.' Come—come to London, darling Grace, in the sweet, the 'merry month of June.' If I descried

your figure walking at such a distance that neither features nor outline of form could be manifest, though never having seen you before, I *should know you*, and more than this, if you entered a room wherein I was, and at the moment of your entry my back was towards you, an undefinable sensation would creep to my heart and whisper there, that there, close upon me, and within reach, a heaven upon earth was proffered, and if duly won, the sorrows, cares, and cankers, of the mortal coil would for ever be laid down!

"Come, then, Grace, it is your pleasure to keep me to some extent in the dark, but gladly do I accept the terms! I will be more liberal to you, my own sweet love, than you are, so to speak, to me; come to London in the month of June, say not the when or the where as to your day of arrival or your residence; come to all the best parties to which, of course, you will be asked, and leave me to feel and then to see your presence. I will not even ask in reply a 'Yes' or 'No,' but, taking your visit to London in that month to be granted, Grace, my darling Grace, permit me thus to revel in fondest expectations!"

It was some little time after the reception of the foregoing letter, that the Lady Grace took her walk to visit and to feed her numerous pets, and having opened the little garden-seat she carried in her hand, she sat down among them, and fell into a train of

thought that bore her mind far away. She knew that she stood on the eve of breaking through the safer bounds of an ideal paradise, for a Garden of Eden that *might still* be Heaven, *or it might* change to a scene of mortal sin, disappointment, and remorse. She was too sensible not to know the fallibility of all human foresight and desire; but at the same time she was too full of ideal love, not to hope, and thoroughly believe in her happy destiny, and that in the change she was about to make, there lay, out-stretched before her, a flowery scene of the rarest hues, warmed by the still romantic sun of reality, and possession, in place of the more placid, and more gently tempered moonbeams of what had been to her, as yet, but as the night of a beautiful dream.

An approaching footstep interrupted this reverie on good or ill, as the case might be, and her faithful old servant, the game-keeper, who had formerly been in the service of the Master of Beverstone, stood before her, hat in hand, to know her commands.

"Well, Tilter," she said, "all my pets are looking well, and I hope they will continue so while I am away. I am going from home for some weeks very soon, and you must tend them with redoubled care, as they will miss me."

"Miss you, my leddy? Going from home, my leddy? Oh, be so bould, where b'ye agoing to? Wherever your leddyship goes you carn't have what you've got here,

nor a more faithful sarvent to look arter y'. Nothing to vex y' as he can help, and everybody willing to do your bidding, and everything, from a white mouse up to a peacock, a loving on y'. Sureli, my leddy, where be going to ?"

"I'm going away, Tilter; but I won't tell you where to, least you should be frightened. Mrs. Babbifrock, from the rectory, has offered to come every day to feed my pets, and to care for them in my absence—is that not kind of her ?"

"Kind of her ? don't know, my leddy: it may be meant so, but in these here things of nat'ral history, don't y', my leddy, don't y' have no dependence on a passon's leddy. Them clergy folks always goes agin nature, and wants things done artificial like. If you gives her power over me, maybe she'll order some necks to be wrung, before y' comes back, as ought to be killed, for want of knowing no better. I've come across a load of rummish passons, or sky pilots, as I calls some on 'em in my time; but there, I will say, now and then you runs up agin a good 'un, like poor dear, old Mr. Crispin,—he *was* a black 'un of the right sort, and ought to have been made a trump on by his bishop. I'll tell y', my leddy, just to amuse y' like, what chanced to be, while my former master was a hunting that country, if there ever was a nice, quiet old sky pilot, that was the passon in question. He *was* not an *in*justice of peace, like amost all of those I ever

knowed in that line, as acted at Petty Sessionses, he wasn't *for* crime instead of being agin it, for if he catched out any evil doer, among *his* flock, he'd show him up, and no two ways about it. A passon, my leddy, is out of his place on a bench, where useful justice is expected like: in the first place, he don't understand the law, preaching 'tis likely has put it out of his head, if 'twas ever in there; and in the second, he hopes to build himself up a character for humanity, by letting crime escape with the least possible punishment. A little pepper's wuss than none at all; but, my leddy, I'll tell y' about Mr. Crispin, for he *was* a blessed old soul. Well, my leddy, as I was saying, that good old clergyman came to the Hall one fine night, and it so happed as that night there warn't any of the gentlefolks asked to meet his Honour, or as could come, but this here good old Mr. Crispin, or 'Bide-the-bent,' as his Honour called him. Down then they two sits, with the squire of the Hall, who always liked to push the bottle about purty stiff. Guests or no guests, 'twas all the same to him.

"Soon after the cloth had been tookted off, says the passon, says he to the squire, 'No more wine for me, kind sir, I thank ye.'

"'Come, come,' replies the squire, 'I feel a cup too low; one more glass, sir, won't hurt ye; come, just this little drop.' That ere little drop like, made the passon a thirstier, for he kept on a taking whatever was

offered, more than done him any good, and I heard his Honour say he was quite sorry like to see it, for he respected that old passon very much.

"At last his Honour saw that, in place of the staid respectable old clergyman, there sat at the table a lamentable specimen of an elder in divinity very far gone like in liquor, who, unused to it, could neither carry himself respectable like, nor sit over-steady in his chair. All this time his Honour had been kicking his host beneath the table cover, and by his looks deprecating this infraction into the worth and decency of an hitherto good, sober, and respectable life.

"Well, as to the passon's saying, or attempting to say, as I have heard tell, that 'the country was truly rural,' the utternost he could have articulated was 'tooral looral,' and at the end of it stare with a giddy smile into the face of his entertainer.

"'This won't do,' at last says his Honour, 'I am very sorry for all this; our good old friend can't walk home unassisted for a mile, in a dark night, and I should be very sorry that any of his parishioners should see him 'tosticated. *We* must take him home; and when we get to the door, I'll go in and break it to his sister, and make the best excuse I can.'

"Well, his Honour and the squire arranged all this, and off they set across the ploughed fields for the passonage,—his Honour hold of one arm and the squire hold of t'other. Their course lay along the edge of a

deep ditch like full of water, a regular squiretrap, as I have heard 'em say with the hounds, and the slippery path in the newly sown wheat coasted right along this very deep ditch.

"All at once skip goes the passon, and stagger goes the squire, who, though a long-seasoned vessel, had taken enough to make him giddy; and down goes the blessed churchman head foremost into about four feet deep of muddy water and weeds, where he begins a swimming about like mad, instead of standing up for his dear life.

"'Hold! stop!' says his Honour, a running along the side of the ditch and a dipping at the passon's coat-tails, as if he had been wishing to catch an otter by the "rudder;" 'hold, sir! stop and stand up, you're all safe!'

"'Stop, sir, stand up!' cried the clergyman, 'I'sh can't walk, sh'waters, sir, whatever you may do, sir, just favour me by (*hic-cup*) keeping your counsel to sh'yourself!'

"'Well but, my dear sir,' exclaimed his Honour, 'you can't swim any farther; but if you go on ahead clawing at those blackthorns put across to stop the ditch, you may seriously hurt your face and hands. Come, give me your hand and let me lift you to sounder footing!'

"'Thanks,' said his reverence; 'if t'addent been you see, for me,—sh—you might have lost—sh—your

life, don't, my good—sh—gentleman, be so unsteady again; keep—sh—sir, keep your legs, whatever—sh—you do.'

"'All right,' said his Honour, 'I will;' and then the squire coming up, who had lain down in a furrough, a splitting of his sides with laughter, they gets hold of the passon on either side again.

"'Stay,' says his Honour, 'he's lost his shovel hat. I must get it, cost what it may.' Down goes his Honour into the wet ditch, a groping up and down as if he'd been tickling for trout.

"'Friend,' says the passon to the squire, a looking at him with a deal of gravity, 'it's sad to see our companion so drunk that he's tumbled into—sh—ditch again. We musn't let—sh—poor young man drown; I'll strip and help him.' Thus saying, the reverend gentleman began to tear at his coat and waistcoat, and while the squire and the passon were struggling, his Honour came out of the ditch and said it was 'impossible like to find the shovel hat.'

"On this they went on their way, when the squire, taking compassion on the passon's wet bald head, and the few white hairs around his temples, on that cold night, pulled off his own hat, and in its scanty dimensions stuck it with some sort of squilsh like on the back of the head of his reeling customer.

"Hardly had they proceeded three yards, when the clergyman brought his supporters to a dead halt, and

stopping short like in a general, though not very make-it-out sort of conversation, he stared with curious astonishment at the bare head of the squire, and in a husky voice exclaimed '*But*, my good—sh—sir, *where's* your hat?'

"'I'll put it on, sir, directly,' replied the squire, ready to die with mirth, and on they went again for a few yards, to be stopped again by the same question about the bare head of the squire, and how it came so.

"At last they got to the door of the manse, and says his Honour to the squire, 'Now do you hold our good friend here, while I go on to get the servants out of the way, and to see his sister, to make the best of it I can. It will be the death of her, or nearly so, to see this dear, respectable old man in a jolly disguise of liquor. But it can't be helped; hold on, and I'll go forward.'

"His Honour had not taken two steps towards the door, when his reverence broke out in song:—

> "'My sledge and hammer lies reclined,
> My bellows, too, have lost their wind;
> My coals are spent, my—sh—iron's gone,
> My nails—sh—'ve druv', my work is done.'

"'Hold, hold your noise, my *good* sir!' exclaimed his Honour, turning back, and putting his hand over the passon's mouth. 'Don't let him sing.'

"'Sh-ir!' said the divine, with an air of great

reproof and reproachful dignity; 'sh—keep—sh—hands to yourself; you're very drunk or I—sh—should smite you.'

"Up then to the door went his Honour, and at the first knock out comes the serving-wench.

"'Betty,' says his Honour, though leastways her name was Harriet, 'go into your mistress and say I—you know me—want to speak to her.'

"In goes Harriet, and out comes the respectable, nice old lady, as was fonder of her brother than anything. What his Honour said to her I never heard, but the nice old lady stood it like bricks and mortar; no hystericks, nor kickings like, but off she goes, or in she goes, on tip-toe, sends her serving-maid to bed, and gets her brother deposited in a chair in the parlour, where his Honour and the squire left him, too far gone in drowsiness to attempt a song again.

"It's odd, my leddy, but that there shovel hat never turned up again, as we knowed on; but I have since heard it said that in later days the Autcological Geological Toppy Graphem Society held one of its scientific meetings there, as they calls it, and that ditch meanwhile having been thown out, up into what them wise people calls a tumuli, they opened the heap, and there they found the shovel hat dried up, quite out of shape, and one of the cleverest professors, him as they called president for the time, declared it to be the helmet of a hancient Briton; and had it conveyed

to London, to prepare a discourse like upon it at their next meeting. Ah! my leddy, them philosophers, as they calls 'em, makes wonders out of a most nothing; and his Honour used dearly to like to sell 'em with things he knowed all about, but as to which he wanted, or seemed to want, to know their opinion. His Honour used to like to get rises out of any on 'em, and when the doctors were all a bringing up the benefit of the Cheltenham waters, and a moving, as was natural, for a subscription about the pumps, his Honour brings in at a public meeting at the Plough, an epitaph in the churchyard, which had more to say for the *bads* than for the *wells*.

> "'Here lies I and my three daughters,
> Killed by drinking the Cheltenham waters;
> If we had stuck to Epsom salts,
> We hadn't been lying in these ere vaults.'"

"Well, Tilter, thanks for your amusing stories," said the Lady Grace; "I wonder if you will ever get to the end of your anecdotes about the church, and have anything to tell me when I come back. Take care of my pets and yourself too, and let me find you all well and happy on my return."

As she said this, the Lady Grace turned to go home in the midst of a thousand blessings murmured forth by her faithful old servant, who was ready to break his heart at the idea of losing her even for a time.

"Humph," he said to himself when she was out of

hearing; "a-going from home be she, what's in the wind now,—anybody been a-courting on her? Well, if so be there is, and he don't behave well, there, just let he turn into a poacher and come arter my pheasants; if I don't tan the hide of he with such a rib-roasting as warn't agreeable, my name's not Tilter but summat else." With that pithy annunciation, the keeper resumed his accustomed duties.

Ere the Lady Grace had gone half the distance to the Hall, she slacked the speed of her progression and fell into a fit of musing, strange to say of a melancholy character. Could not the prospect opening out before her raise her spirits and exult her heart? Was she not about to meet the one, the only one, who had awakened in her brain an overwhelming affection, and who, by the assurances of his love, had gilded even the refined gold of her pure life, and waked up those romantic feelings which, *while they last*, drive away the triter thoughts of the world and open out the sweet dreams of fairy land, in which the fresh, unjaded young heart so delights to lose itself. Yes, all novelty as well as true love held out united attraction, but for all that there came over the mind of the beautiful girl a cloud of inexpressible gloom. She knew not why nor wherefore, but, as she threaded her way through those calm and princely avenues so well known and so endeared to her as associated with happy, calm thoughts on, and letters read from, the

man of her heart, each tree, each bough, each herb and flower, seemed to greet her in saddest silent adieus, as if she was never to return to them; the bright, the happy creature they had so long sheltered and endeavoured to please in every hue, in every essence that heaven had assigned even to its humbliest herb and flower.

It is impossible to account for those shades of gloom which occasionally pass over the paths in life, as if caused by some warning wing while floating high in air coming between us and the sun; but I have no doubt that many of my readers have felt, or imagined that they felt, a dim prognostication of coming misfortune, to fade again to nothingness or to work them misery; such, then, was the position of the Lady Grace. At the moment she could not tell why she felt so sad, nor what it was that oppressed her; so she did as many have done before her—she held off at arm's length the gloomy sensation; looked evil forebodings in the face; fell back on her own innocent and buoyant heart, and on the often-assured affection of her hitherto unseen lover; stepped more lightly and faster than she had done before; raised her again smiling and happy face to Heaven; chased every shadow from her trusting heart; and, in joyful anticipation of a romantic adventure to be crowned with bliss, she returned to the Hall to await the eventful hour.

In the height of the London season of 18—, at a

time when the Derby was over, and, as far as racing went, a quiet week's interval between the scene of the turf's Blue Ribbon and the Royal Heath at Ascot, the Master of Beverstone was in town, and, of course, a welcome guest at all that was going on. He had ridden in the park and perambulated Kensington Gardens, scanned every saddle, and threaded every throng, but, still, neither there nor elsewhere, on foot nor on horseback, in carriage, at assembly or ball, theatre or opera, could he meet with any figure that held for him the attraction he expected, and if he began to despair it was only because delay made the heart sick; in no one way did he cease his anxious search, nor did his fervid desire die in the lamp that yet seemed to light him to the goal of his future existence.

It was a hot, close summer night, and in deference to "*the* thing to go to," as this masquerade was called, there was little else going on, so that the spacious rooms were crowded with all the rank and fashion of the day; all that was beautiful, all that was witty or mentally attractive, and with all who thought themselves, or desired to be thought, either the one or the other. At first the pressure was so great that dancing was very much impeded, but as it grew later the more retired boudoirs were in request, seats were at a premium, those who, generally speaking, had come on purpose to meet had contrived to let the crowd separate them

from their chaperons, and had retired into corners large enough for themselves, or their two selves, but without a scrap of room for any others. Dancing had reached its height, but still, as a wandering spirit, our hero threaded his way, like some biped butterfly stopping for a moment to rest now on this lovely flower now on that, but fixed by none.

In his hand he held his mask, which he had taken off, perhaps on account of heat, or that some one, whom he expected there, might suppose that *she* recognised his features. He had been to many balls and assemblies before, and had closely inspected each quadrille and waltz wherever he had been, as if he belonged to a detective-force and was on duty to discover a mysterious lady suspected of being surreptitiously possessed of another heart besides her own; but to his purpose all in vain.

"Distance," is *said* to "lend enchantment to the view:" it may be so when there are faults in form and features, in river, loch, or mountain; but, faithful historian as I am, to my mind the reality of beauty, fairly confessed to view, is a million times more enchanting than either space, mist, dress, or artistical decoration can make it, and so thought the Master of Beverstone, when, in a quadrille, he saw moving a tall graceful figure in rather an antiquated dress, the half-black mask attached to which disclosed to view a mouth and chin the dimples around which seemed so

attractively sweet that they reminded him of the cup of the most luscious flower.

Prone as his ardent mind was to receive peculiar impressions, and sanguine too as he was by nature to jump at once to the conclusion he desired, he had already found himself several times mistaken, and even to a certain extent hampered with flirtations to which he had never desired to attain, for the efforts made by him to look under masks and to see more of those on whom he had fixed a suspicious glance, laid him open to love affairs to which his station, reputation, and looks entitled him, for Cupid *will* blow a trumpet of fame as well as the god of war, and let them say what they will of it, love *is* gregarious and follows suit, a bird of passage fond of flight and seldom stationary, but, as exceptions prove a rule, if once he lights *on all* that nature and admiration require, there he has been known to perch for ever!

There, then, stood the hero of this tale, watching every movement in that graceful figure, in the quadrille alluded to, as if his life depended on it; and once either his soul flattered him and his eyes deceived him, for he thought he saw the tiniest little sidelong glance in the world directed to his face, but which turned away again as the owner of it had to perform "the dame seul." The quadrilles over, the people who had composed them mingled with the crowd, when one young lady, very soon shaking off her partner, came

through the throng, and taking both the hands of the girl the Master of Beverstone had been watching seemed delighted to see her; some indescribable look there was exchanged by the brilliant eyes within those two black masks, and the two figures, dressed precisely alike, of the same height, the same contour of form, and of similar graces in every way, for an instant were silent, as if they paused for some event that both expected, yet neither dared to expedite. By this time the Master of Beverstone was close to these two girls, and for an instant seemed perplexed; but then that strange action of the inner life came to his relief, a feeling of intense admiration stole over him, occasioned by those two figures he knew not why, and then he felt as if to one of them his very soul adhered. Time was precious, and the pause seemed to await infraction; he took the hand of the beautiful, but curiously disguised, figure next him, and permitting the customary sign of glad recognition as of one whom he really knew to be seen by any lookers-on, he said, in a suppressed but concentrated tone, while he looked at her companion,—

"The Lady Grace; but if not, pray introduce me to her!"

The hand still left at liberty flew to the black mask above it, and raising and moving it a little, for the first time that lovely face beamed upon him with a shy, sweet archness of expression, the introduction he asked for being accorded in no other way; and then

he knew he was in the presence of his love, and read in her intelligent eyes the promise of the bliss to come.

I will not fatigue my readers by following the Master of Beverstone through the mazes of Mrs. Boem's brilliant fête, nor describe my lamented and gallant friend, now no more, the late Sir Horace Seymour, who, with another man or two of similarly gigantic stature, were dressed as young ladies, making themselves loudly conspicuous as in search of "elder brothers." In those days the more sensible mask, requiring some mental talent, overruled the more recently adopted "fancy ball," and bears and monkeys did the amusing and better part of bores, who now only crawl about to mar some momentary happiness, endeavouring, and even for an instant enacting the part of "Marall," but lacking power sufficient to permanently disarrange the heart's resolve, or obliterate characters impressed by the hand of Nature.

Thus the brilliant and noisy fête passed off, and the Master of Beverstone and the Lady Grace left that ball, the happy hour of their being personally known to each other thus achieved.

It is the fashion to talk of retirement in the country and the rural quietude of small towns or villages, but if man or woman seek to be alone and to be lost to the researches of their acquaintances,—acquaintances are not always friends,—there is no such wilderness as is comprised in the great metropolis of England or of

other countries. Such solitude anywhere else as that attains to, when purposely selected, in the midst of the myriads of human beings who shoulder each other without time to think of their neighbours' affairs, can never be attained. In smaller towns or villages there is ever some "Grundy," male or female, that has nothing else to do than to start at shadows or to apply some puffed-up spark to a slow match of curious manufacture, to coax a blaze of discomfort to some pretty girl or handsome woman, and then to look for safety from the foot or hand of offended man in the obscuring smoke raised by dirty deeds. In London these little wretches are lost in the moving multitude around, and, like the adder in the wilderness of heaths, their poisonous hiss and dangerous venom exist, but all unheeded, for loftier sounds assail the ear, and echoing footsteps trample out their coils, and divest them of any power to harm. In London, then, for a time, we must lose sight of our hero and heroine.

Far be it from me to suppose, or to induce my readers to deem, that two such spirits as those in the breasts of the Master of Beverstone and the Lady Grace could long be confined in the fetters of the artificial world, or severed in any way by any circumstances that chance or fate had adversely forged to thwart the dictates of the inner life, or the too beautiful designs of that strangely curious handmaiden to the will of the Great Creator, Nature. They

met, in implicit reliance on each other, in love so splendidly graceful, that man, or the enactments of man, could not thwart it, and, for a time almost wild in the intoxication of loving and being beloved, fortune smiled more graciously, and the Master of Beverstone and the Lady Grace, popular with all the leaders of fashion, and in the midst of many real friends, really found how "light *was* the foot of time that only trod on flowers," and thus we must leave them till the close of the London season.

It will be seen by the foregoing narrative, that a pure and beautiful girl had loved a lover by repute, and that, having made him the hero of her inner life, she had enrolled him in all the attractions imagined by her sensitive soul, and made him the treasured object of her every thought. In this harmless and happy ideal she would probably have dwelt for years, had not that which she felt sure was a false detraction roused the poetry, the liberality, and the honesty of her woman's nature, and forced her into a more decided position. She had never known a man whom she could in her heart admire, as we have seen from one of her letters; all other men were to her but "as pictures on a wall," and she had passed them by with cool indifference. The rich suitor and the handsome man had sued her in vain; with looks and eyes and wealth, they had sought her, but from them all she had turned to gaze within, there to listen, as it were, to

a still, sweet voice, whose whispers could make themselves heard above the clamour of a world.

The London season over, they were to part; but for a time. In absolute number, the days on which they were *not* to see each other were not many, and it seemed as if the scythe of Time, "making hay while the sun shone," would soon mow the swarth, or cut all impediments away. Alas! how often have I—have we all seen the blue and cloudless sky of the more lovely morning change before night to clouds and tears, to storm and rain that dashed from fruit-tree and flower, the promise of future luxury and honey. On the happy scene of love there came a shadow that seemed to betoken some impending evil: up, over the high tide of their mutual affection, rose the black, wild, weedy brow of a hitherto sunken rock ahead. Pure as her heart was, as the white rose when its first bud bursts into the full-blown flower, and offers up its yet unpolluted sweets to the dewy lips of morn, she saw no wrong and feared no ill, while the high-souled man whom she thus madly loved, existed, or seemed to exist, for no other purpose than to love, to shield, and watch over her best interests. She *had* given him more than her life, and knowing, as she did really know, his honour and his resolution, when they parted, but for a short time, each loved intensely, and each looked on to further joy.

That golden maxim, "never to postpone till to-

morrow that which can be done to-day," is the wisest resolution of all: there is no telling in this world what ills may arise in the course of a few short days or hours. Procrastination is often the root of much evil; but in the present instance, neither the Master nor the Lady Grace had anything to blame themselves for; and, yet no blame attaching to them, still there *was* a rock ahead looming in the distance, but under the waves, that had to be encountered and contended with,—a rock, indeed, which might work them misery and misfortune.

Thus, then, they had at last met, and thus they parted. All that they had seen of each other, wrapped in the romantic garb of mutual trust, the source of their affection, sprung and still flowing from their inner life, had only made them love each other the more. Beautiful reality had beatified ideal worth, and appropriation set its jewelled seal on a bond of union that bid fair to test the attempts of time to shake the foundation of their wild and romantic affection or madness for each other. If, when on parting, his lips had clung to her's as he held her clasped in his strong arms, if her soft, expressive, truthful, and utterly confiding eyes looked into his as into some deep well in search of the pellucid wave that even yet concealed mysterious treasures from her view, what then? There was nothing between them "forbidden by heaven," nor "fined by human laws." Their souls were wedded by angelic, not by mortal

ties, and yet the danger looming in the distance sprung from the black and scheming malevolence of man and woman, from one of her own sex, too, but who had a bitter and disappointed mind.

There are in this world some whose souls, if they have any, unsold to the Fiend of Darkness, are prone to the destruction of the reputation of others, willing, if they can, to vilify their compeers in every shade of existence, and to drag down all to their own degraded level; to thwart their betters, and to use every living creature who may be unhappy enough to be below their own level, as their tools, or stepping-stones, with or whence to spread their poison and to stab to the death each slumbering virtue that has sunk to rest in dreamy conscious security of its innate honesty and worth. I regret to say that this miserable deformity on Heaven's own creation exists alike in man and woman, but oftener in man than in the softer sex, though kept in the first instance much more out of sight, because man is more immediately responsible for his acts than woman, and can be personally appealed to and *touched*, if he fails to make all the dictated reparation in his power.

Between the male and female wretch,—I can apply to them no other term,—there exists some slight difference. The woman's spite generally arises from pique in regard to neglected charms, or jealousy of some rival. A disappointed, revengeful woman is "*the* dramatic

serpent" itself, possessed of an orchard of fabulous apples of the bitterest kind, the painted surface of which conceals the poison that "*lies*," and lives within the outer rind. A woman of this kind may be set against a man because she thinks he has slighted her charms or her power to please, or she may feel a morbid animosity to him because she has sat by and seen one whom she feigned to call her own friend worshipped in her presence, without so much as an admiring look being cast on her. From the sweet wild woodland, and the apparent or assumed confidential intercourse of *three*, from the trusting faith imposed in her *by two* who really loved each other, she may repair unto the association of the world, and with ears wide open to catch the whispers of crabbed old women and envious cowards, she may, by retailing their venom to the ear that is supposed to be the easiest imposed on of the two, and thus create an infinity of unhappiness, be the means of bringing about a broken heart. If the authority in atrocious falsehood is traced to a female source,—traced, too, beyond the possibility of doubt, as in my life I have known it to be,—an injured man has no remedy, save in an action for libel, and from that he refrains, because to proceed in it would implicate the sacred name of one who, trusting him, had loved, still loved, loved wisely, and was beloved again.

With a villanous man of this backbiting, envious

breed, the case is apter for redress. It is true that human law now protects each biped cur from personal chastisement, and fines the righteous and quicker hand of lynch-like justice, if it attempts to punish the murderer of reputation; but, for all that, an offended gentleman can yet invite an enemy who assumes to any footing in society to an open field across the channel, and if he declines the meeting to so insult him and cross his path, and watch for a sufficient excuse to kick or strike him, that the bitterest coward is prone to think twice before he seeks to malign a known and approved gentleman. As a quiet observer of what is erroneously called the march of intellect, progress of education and religion, and improvement of the domiciles of the poor, combined with the fidgety restlessness and indiscriminate charity of said-to-be philanthropical ladies, young and old, the conclusion I have come to is, that there is more crime and of deeper magnitude than ever, and a greater dearth of honest and deserving servants, domestics in the house, and agricultural labourers out of it, who can be trusted, than ever. But this lamentable fact affects not the period of the story as to which I am now writing: there were faithful servants, young and old men like Tilter, then; we should be puzzled to find an equivalent for them now.

But to return to our hero and heroine of the present tale. The London season being over, Goodwood and the

Cowes Regatta also passed, sea air sufficiently imbibed at Brighton, Weymouth, and other watering-places, to oust from the lungs the smoke and heated air of London, the aristocracy having sought the bracing moors and mountains of Scotland, returned to their county homes, and issued invitations to their castles, halls, and houses, to all those whose society they desired.

Among these invitations was one that included the Lady Grace and the Master of Beverstone; it was sent to each by an admiring and a generous friend, who was tacitly aware of the understanding between them, and who would, whenever it was in her power, invariably ask them both to meet on all festive occasions beneath her roof. The consequence of this was that, in the magnificent mansion of —— Abbey, Grace and the Master found themselves invited to locate for a space which promised them many days of uninterrupted happiness. Just previous to accepting this invitation, the Master of Beverstone was at his club in St. James's Street, having the entire of its gorgeously furnished rooms to himself, or what was nearly so, as there was scarce a leading gentleman left in town to keep in countenance the officers of the Guards whose term of duty kept them so confined. He had ordered his letters to be forwarded to his club, as he had not of late been permanently resident in London, and on the day to which I now particularly allude several letters were put before him, and by the characters of one of them he

knew it to come from the hand he loved best in all the world.

The letter was short, and as an author knowing all secrets, I must say that it was beautifully to the purpose, for it ran thus :—

"—— *Hall, September.*

"My dearest Love,

"What joy! with your dear letter this morning came *my* invitation to —— Abbey for the 3rd of this month. I go there on Tuesday! Can a renewal of *our* perfect happiness be indeed so near? What bliss!!! Take care, as I know you ever will, not to let the world know what the world cannot understand.

"Your own most affectionate

"Grace."

When the Master of Beverstone had his letters thus delivered to him, he had the large club room all to himself. For a moment, therefore, he sat in his gorgeous solitude, with the Lady Grace's letter open on his knee, and in the short, sweet contemplation of happiness announced to be in store. Had I the power of Asmodeus to lay bare the bosoms of men, as that diabolic myth was supposed to have in respect to the roofs of their houses, I am very well assured that in the heart of the Master of Beverstone I should have read the words inscribed, "In charity with all mankind," and

perhaps have further deciphered, "and in faithful and adoring affection for *one* lady, the ruler of his every hope and deed." Entranced by delicious thought and honest love, for a moment the hand dwelt on his knee with the open letter, which was then kissed and transferred to his bosom, and the brave heart, in all its unsuspecting confidence, never dreamt of danger to all he held most dear.

The September month of which I am now writing was beautiful, as beautiful as the later days of September, as well as those of October, often are, and the brilliant party at the Abbey partook of all the sports and festivities that rank, territorial possession, and riches have at command. Not an hour of the day that had not its agreeable occupation, and not an hour of the night that was not in happy requisition. The ringing cry of the rushing hounds, the cub fox close before them, burst in wild melody from the woods, cheered by the rattling halloa and the light-toned horn, while o'er the yellow stubble, or by the reddening spinney, the cautious setter ranged, bold in speed, his lofty head in air, but timid to a touch, lest by a too close approximation he should spring the birds he hoped to find crouched close upon the ground. There were rides, equestrian hours in which the lovers were together, and retired walks in the hushed and innocently listening woods, where they could be by themselves; the Abbey, too, had capacious rooms that were not always occupied, and lesser rooms

also, near unto each other, where signs and looks, and even sighs, could be exchanged; so the lovers *were* happy, happy as high-toned, chastened, fiery spirits could be, and as bright as planets in conjunction, needing no "borrowed light," and without even a mist to threaten an eclipse or make them dull on the apprehension of coming storms.

In the society of which the Lady Grace and the Master formed a part, there were many men and women; but as they do not come within the scope of my narrative, or were like thousands of other people in this world who move through life, mediocrities in mind and passion, they would not be interesting to the reader. There are three, however, that come more prominently forward in this true history, and to those we must turn attention. The first was the graceful, kind-hearted lady of the Abbey, high in rank, powerful in position, and possessed of all those finer sensibilities which so often adorn the female sex. Though past the prime of life, she was stately and still very beautiful, and very much attached to the Lady Grace. There was also a young and pretty girl, a favourite of all the world, so pretty, not quite handsome, but very near it, who laughed and sang in the most joyous, well-instructed, and silvery tones, and whistled, or more properly speaking, warbled to perfection. In short, she could do anything and everything well, and, strange to say, because she was not exactly beautiful she did not

seem, as far as it could be then known, ever to have made an enemy. Among her compeers she was familiarly known as Carrie, but as it is necessary to give her a surname, she would have left her visiting-card as "Miss C. Mayflower." Carrie was also a sincere friend of the Lady Grace; but then there was another off-shoot from the female tree, a limb of considerable wither, whose face, though roughly scored by the scrubbing-brush of Time, was not nearly so wrinkled as her heart. What a pity it is that some ladies, when they get old and past the creation of soft ideas in others, should retain the worst attributes of a niggard nature, and live apparently for no other purpose than to do mischief and occasion misery. Why should not all women of a certain age be the kind, considerate friend to youth that many are? Why should they not make people love them in their age as some one probably had done in their youth? But, strange to say, there are instances where humanity perishes from the mind, while motion in the limb still lives, as if to carry inveterate malignancy to the spot for it to work its will. This Mistress Marem was of good family, or she would not have been asked there; her propensities to slander and ever watchful activity to detect a blot upon the page of others was well-known—so much so, that people were amused at her spleen, and inclined to laugh at the constant bitterness of her disposition. It was not long, therefore, that, like a raven from a rock, she

thought she detected a lamb within the scope of her talons, and this lamb was the reputation of the Lady Grace. Insinuations and shrugs, mournful shakings of the head and shivers, were the first throes of this old lady in the propagation of evil. No one understood better than she did how to convey a censure in a frown, or detraction in a sneer, or how to wink a reputation away. At last, however, she delivered herself of short, pithy, but disjointed sentences, such as "My dear, have you seen anything *in particular?* Has anything struck you *lately?*" Then, "I don't wish to make remarks, but some people *are* a good deal together." And this sort of what an artilleryman might designate as a game at long balls continued for some time, or till such time as she had cleared her decks for assault at closer quarters, and had double-shotted her guns.

It was on a rainy day, a day of clouds and nature's tears, that Mistress Marem sent her maid to inquire if her noble hostess was in her room alone and disengaged; if so, Mrs. Marem craved an interview. The reply was, "Come, I shall be most happy to see you."

When Mrs. Marem entered the boudoir of her entertainer, she had clothed her face in a still more sombre hue than it had by nature; indeed, she did look like one who had been starved on vinegar, or weaned on pickles, so great was the acerbity expressed throughout her visage.

"My dear lady," she said, as soon as the maid had

shown her in and retired, "I come to you on very unpleasant business—a business which I feel that you, the head of the house, and entertainer of all assembled here, should be possessed of before worse comes of it. You know I never liked the Master of Beverstone."

"Well," exclaimed her hostess, interrupting her, "I know *that* very well; but you must not abuse him, as he is so great a friend of mine, and I like him very much."

"Well" (with a peculiar sniff), "I am not going to abuse him," continued Mistress Marem. "I am only doing a duty to you, in putting you into the knowledge of something which must affect another great friend of yours, the Lady Grace, who is at this present moment, as it may be said, entrusted to your care. She has committed herself, I fear to a great extent, with your friend the Master of Beverstone, and he has had the bad taste and cruelty to read her letters to him aloud at his club, in a boastful way to his companions."

"Nothing shall induce me to believe it," said the indignant hostess. "If they do love each other, what harm is there in that? Two people more fitted for each other I never saw, and as to his so basely degrading himself, or the better nature of man, by reading aloud to his boon companions, in a public club, the letter of a dear, confiding girl, that, I will stake my life upon it, *is a lie.*"

"Well," rejoined Mistress Marem, with an audible

sniff and a peculiar twitching of her head, "all I can say is, that so did the Master read and dwell upon that letter in his club-room, that thus read, the contents of it have got abroad; and here they are in writing, for you, and the Lady Grace, too, to see them and convince yourselves, that is if it will do *her* any good."

The Lady of the Abbey took the supposed letter in speechless astonishment, and read it twice over, slowly, the better to consider its contents. "Yes," she murmured, as if talking to herself, "the dates are correct; and as to the expressions in the letter, I know not what to think. There may be a vile forgery in this. The letter, as I believe, is unreal; but, at the risk of shocking her, we must show it to the Lady Grace, because she alone will directly know the truth. Come with me at once, in case you should be able to answer any further questions." They then proceeded to Lady Grace's room, and found her seated with Carrie Mayflower, whom the hostess for a time dispensed with, under the plea that she wished to be alone with her beautiful and little-suspecting friend.

When the two ladies were seated, the Lady Grace at once saw that there was a vast deal more in the wind, than even the rain accounted for, the face of Mrs. Marem alone being the living index of foul weather. The handsome features of her hostess were expressive of sadness, rather than of anything like severity, and in a kindly intoned voice she began the conversation.

"My dearest Grace, we have come to you for some explanation of a very unpleasant matter, in regard to which I will not dwell, simply from the desire of avoiding unnecessary pain. Mrs. Marem seems to have received the copy of a letter, which it is assumed that you had addressed to our friend the Master of Beverstone just previously to your coming here, and which he is said to have made undue use of, by publicly reading the contents of that letter at his club in St. James's Street. Mrs. Marem has the supposed copy of the letter; so you will at once tell us, I am sure, if the contents are genuine and writen by you. Mind me, my dear Grace, though your expressions, if the letter is yours, may be too unguarded, still the blame—very, very grave as it is—rests entirely with the Master of Beverstone, for his breach of faith to one who so implicitly trusted him, and of whose affection for him he is supposed to have thus boasted to a club full of men. All those men, or at least many of them, are known to your family and to you. Tell me, then, is this assumption as false as I am sure it is, and did you write in those exact terms to the Master of Beverstone? For *if* you *did*, you will recognize *your particular expressions*, and *those* expressions *could only be known to others through some monstrous misconduct*."

As these questions were put to the Lady Grace, at first she appeared to shrink from the scrape she and one whom she loved better than herself seemed to

have fallen into, but as her hostess continued her address, there was, so to speak, a rising up and even dilation of her beautifully graceful and commanding figure, and her fair brow and flashing eyes assumed an incredulous and haughty expression.

"My dearest friend," she at length exclaimed to her hostess, with a slight contemptuous glance at Mrs. Marem, "had such a charge come from anyone but you, against our friend the Master of Beverstone, I should simply have scouted it with the most ineffable disdain; but coming from you, it assumes an importance which it otherwise would not have had, simply because you think it requires explanation. Whatever I *may* have written, for that, to myself I alone am accountable; but that the Master of Beverstone ever made such use of any letter of mine, to the contradiction of such a slander I would pin my life; the charge is *false, false* as the most bitter calumniator could imagine. As Mrs. Marem has a copy of the *supposed* letter, let me see it: if the words it contains have ever been so used by me, I shall recognize them immediately, and be a better judge."

"Show her the letter, my dear Mrs. Marem," rejoined her hostess, when that lady immediately produced the letter; and putting on her spectacles, in which she always seemed to take a green, or jaundiced view of all the more agreeable occurrences of life, prepared to read it, but the long graceful arm of the Lady Grace,

with a quick movement, took it from her hand, before she could resist the attempt in any way, and during an expostulation from Mrs. Marem, as to its reft possession, at once began to read it to herself. Ere she had read two lines, her lofty look left her, and she burst into a flood of bitter tears. If we could have seen behind Mrs. Marem's spectacles, there would have been observed a green gleam of spiteful satisfaction; but, as it was, that old lady simply threw a triumphant look upon her hostess, when the latter, rising, took the Lady Grace by the hand, and led her to her bedroom, Mrs. Marem standing up as they left her, and holding out her hand, for the return of the letter, in vain. She was unnoticed, and the hand of the poor suffering girl seemed clenched on that proof of her lover's turpitude with the grasp and tenacity of despair.

Mrs. Marem went to her own apartment in the long corridor, which was nearly opposite to that of the Lady Grace, and remained there, no doubt, for the especial and pleasurable purpose of beholding her sad victim return to it from the room of their hostess; but the interview of the friends was long, and the gong sounded as a summons to tea, a summons irresistible to the old lady, and during her absence in the tea-room, the nearly heart-broken girl sought the sanctuary of her own chamber.

The Lady Grace came not to tea; but when the guests assembled in the saloon before dinner, there she

was, pale certainly, and with eyes that showed some trace of tears, yet erect, with carriage graceful as ever, and in perfect self-possession of every faculty. The Master of Beverstone, who had been out shooting all the day, at once saw that something was wrong, and with a desire to ask what it was, and to whisper, if necessary, words of comfort in her ear, more than once, in the midst of a crowd of guests, endeavoured to approach her; but, strange to say, and much to his surprise, she decidedly avoided his more immediate presence, and at last, on seeing a chair unoccupied, she moved to it, and sat down between two ladies, so that he could not speak to her without being overheard. Then came the announcement of dinner, and the ceremony enacted by the hostess of pairing off those whom etiquette suggested were to go into the dining-room together, whether they liked it or not, and during the general move, and in the battle of passing each other, as Lady Grace went by, she whispered in his ear, in a strange concentrated breath, "Come to the library, after coffee, when some one begins to sing or play." Thus, then, they went into dinner, but in the arrangement of the seats at table, somehow or other the lovers were not brought together as had usually been contrived, and which event had been most anxiously looked for by the Master, and more, he saw that Lady Grace now evidently avoided his juxtaposition, an act in which she was decidedly abetted by the lady of the

Abbey, and in a mist, or mental abstraction, the Master took his place at the table, silent and unhappy, and in a mood for neither meat nor wine. During that banquet, and while the guests were at their wine, the Master of Beverstone was remarked by all as not being anything like himself: true it is that he talked, and tried to laugh at the wit of others, as usual; but though he endeavoured to look gay, there was a cloud on his heart that almost made his attempts at mirth ghastly, and so did he depress the gaiety of all his numerous friends, that the ladies were joined in the drawing-room earlier than usual.

After coffee and liqueur had been handed round, Carrie Mayflower, as if for some especial reason, was called to the pianoforte, and for that more immediate call she seemed evidently prepared; and the watchful eyes of the Master of Beverstone saw that the Lady Grace had quietly retired from the room, but not wishing his departure to be simultaneously observed, with a strong curb on his actions, he tarried awhile before he sought the promised interview.

The Lady Grace, that sweet and beautiful girl, out of whose heart all joy, peace and *faith* had departed, was glad to find herself alone in the library for some short time before the arrival of her lover. It had been a hard struggle to her to maintain an appearance of calm indifference all through that miserable evening, to be obliged to bear her part in conversation with her

wonted animation, and, above all, it was hard for her to be forced to look at *him*, to hear *his* voice, and to catch *his* glance, beaming as it ever did, when it turned on her, with all the ardent, honest feelings of his heart, softened by the tenderness which has so aptly been termed "passion in repose," to see all *that*, and yet to believe that he was false, not only to her, but to all the nobler instincts of a manly nature.

Yet even in the solitude she had sought, that nervous pause immediately preceding painful explanation, she could not be calm; she felt she was almost unequal to it, yet had to nerve herself for the coming interview. She had resolutely to close her ears against the voice of her "inner life," pleading for forgiveness for him; she had to try to forget the past in which the joys of yesterday were included, and steadily to contemplate the future, which would begin before the morrow's sun had risen.

"I cannot bear it," she moaned at last, falling at the same time upon her knees by a sofa, and striving to stifle her choking sobs. "I *cannot* bear it, my heart is breaking." As she thus knelt, unconscious of the flight of time, the door softly opened and the Master of Beverstone came in, his noble form erect and his step the light, joyous tread of one who is about to meet some great happiness. For a moment he thought the room was untenanted, but then the form he so tenderly loved was descried crouching by the sofa, and, advancing

rapidly, he stooped over her, saying tenderly as he did so,—

"My darling, what is this? Alone and unhappy! Can I not comfort you, my own dear life?"

At the sound of his voice and the well-known, light, fond touch of his hand upon her bowed head, the Lady Grace shivered as from the touch of ice, and avoiding the assistance he would have given, she rose to her feet, and by a great effort mastering her emotion, said, in a cold, concentrated tone, and without one word of preface,—

"I have asked you to come here to-night, that I might return with my own hand all the letters which from time to time I have received from you, and to beg that you will give back to me mine, every line that you have ever received from me. I cannot risk," and here her eyes flashed sudden scorn upon him, "having the *whole* of my correspondence read aloud *for the amusement of your club.*"

It was a very rare occurrence for the Master of Beverstone to be taken by surprise; but if the gentle hand of the Lady Grace had been suddenly and rudely raised to strike him, he could not have been more confounded than he was by her address. The colour rose for an instant to his brow; she detected it, and before he could speak she went on rapidly, her scornful tones growing more marked at every word.

"Yes, I am glad to see that; hardened as you are,

some shame is still left to you. I know not what secrets may be hidden in that cold and calculating heart of yours, but in the eyes of all honourable men and women, you can scarce have a blacker sin to answer for than the deception of one who would, until a few short hours ago, have staked her life upon your truth and honour; but I am justly punished——"

Here her voice fell, and a deep blush suffused her fair face and spread almost to her uncovered shoulders. "My love *was* perhaps too lightly won."

The mournful tone in which the last words were uttered, was infinitely much more than her lover could bear. He at once forgot the severity of her speech and cutting sarcasm, and the gross charge she had made—he only saw the troubled expression in her fond eyes and the lovely blushes which had hitherto only been called into life by his words and caresses, and going forward he clasped her in his arms, and amidst a rain of passionate kisses, which she vainly tried to avoid, he asked her "to end the groundless tragedy she was enacting, and to be his own, sweet, dear, loving Grace once more?"

But as if his kisses had stung her to the quick she broke from his embrace.

"Do not *touch* me," she said; "if you would not turn my scorn to loathing, you will not *so* insult me again. You think because a woman is weak enough to love as I have done, that she will be weak enough to forgive any outrage; but you have roused a spirit you will find

it hard to quell! There, take back your letters—I would I could forget how often my trusting lips have pressed them for the writer's sake,—and give me mine, that is if you have *not* distributed them among your friends as proofs of your success——"

"By Heaven, Grace, this is too much!" exclaimed the Master of Beverstone. "I can bear a great deal from you, but I must know the meaning of all this delusion. With what breach of confidence—how—where—and when, have you to accuse me? I have never broken faith to you—I swear it—"

"Hush," she replied, "I want no oaths. Can you deny that you read aloud at your club, to admiring listeners, the last short note you had from me, written just before we were to meet here?—a brief note, which I wrote out of the fulness of a loving heart. Oh misery! to think that you, *you* whom I have trusted *so* implicitly and loved with such devotion, could have been so base and unmanly. I *hate* myself when I remember that I have answered your caresses and given you love for love."

She spoke so rapidly that he could not interrupt her, and even when she had finished, so utterly stunned were his mental faculties that it was some seconds before he *could* reply.

"And you ask *me* to deny *that!*" he exclaimed at last. "You *can* believe that I *could* act so infamously towards you and towards myself? Oh! Grace, my own loved Grace, tell me that it is some cruel delusion, that we are

both in a frightful dream, and that I am not really deemed guilty of the sin you charge me with, nor you, of your cruel suspicions. That you do *not* in truth believe the terrible things you have said, tell me, tell me, Grace, I implore you!"

"I did *not* believe it without proof," she shortly replied, "incontestable and sure."

"What proof?"

"A copy of my note to you, taken down by some one of those whom I suppose were your admiring hearers."

"Have you recognised, then, your own expressions, —those very words you in *that* letter wrote to me?"

"I have: the copy is in my hand now, and word for word the words are mine."

"May I see it?"

"Perhaps——"

"But, Grace," continued the Master of Beverstone, "my own, my true and trusting Grace, my love, surely you will believe me when I tell you that not one line you have ever written to me, has been heard by or read by any other than myself. I cannot believe that anything like a copy of a letter you ever wrote to me has been made; for on all occasions, after reading and kissing your letters, as soon as I could approach a flame that flame has consumed the paper to ashes, and left not a vestige of your handwriting. I have no letters to return to you."

"Do you remember those last written words of mine,

as I do intensely now—to every syllable? If so, there, take the indisputable proof of your turpitude," and with an action of scorn, the Lady Grace put into his hand the written words in question.

If ever there was fascination in the basilisk eyes of the coiled serpent, a similar expression beamed in those of the Master, as he glanced on the well-known words that had reached him at his club. He gazed on the paper as if to wrench its author to the light, and bring him to instant atonement or destruction.

"Grace," he said, "it *is*—they are your every word. Those loved expressions are in my soul now; the note which contained them, after being read, revered and caressed, was burnt by my own hand without one word spoken aloud, to myself or to anyone. I cannot by any mortal means account for this copy. Are *you* sure that while you wrote it, or between your writing it and its reaching me, no eye could discover the contents?"

"I am: it was a sealed envelope—you must know if that often-seen seal was intact when you received it."

"But, oh! Grace," and he stretched out his arms towards her, "I can't account for this. My brain is bewildered, and I cannot think."

She stood stock-still, haughty and scornful in her loveliness, before him, and with outstretched arms he continued,—

"Come; come to me, Grace, and with that dear head upon my bosom tell me that you do *not* believe in this

accursed lie, and that you will still trust in me as before. As to that assumption in regard to your note, I pledge myself never to rest until I prove on the body of some villain, if the villain is a man, the lie that has caused to me such misery!"

He stood a moment thus, with outstretched arms, and a hopeful aching heart; but there was no relenting, kind response to his passionate and earnest appeal, and then in his turn an angry fire flashed in the Master's eyes.

"Then you doubt my affection *and my truth?*" he said, in tones as haughty as those of the Lady Grace had been. "You believe in the cowardly traducer, male or female, and give ear to a detraction which at present I have not the means to contradict, nor to meet it in any way other than in contemptuous repudiation. You have blighted the flowers of my Eden upon earth; yes, and I am constrained to say that you have yourself, Lady Grace, fallen from the high position you held in my estimation, and you drive, you force me to abandonment and despair."

Thus saying, the master of Beverstone turned towards the door. One more lingering look on the graceful, yet motionless form he was quitting, perhaps for ever, and he left the library, ascended the stairs, crossed the corridors, and shut himself up in his own apartment.

When the Master of Beverstone reached his room,

and felt that in all probability from that night he should not have an opportunity of speaking to Lady Grace again, he keenly felt the utter wretchedness of his position. Thus had he lost, unaccountably, and for no just reason on earth, the beautiful creature that had given him her implicit trust, that had selected him from all other men on account of his supposed worth, and who at last had loved him with a passion as intense as was his own. She had been cruel to him in this instance, indeed, but still under a belief he knew to be erroneous. Why, then *why*, he asked his own heart did he leave her with an angry word upon his lips, and a resolution to be as proudly angry with her as she had been with him? He had no more time for thought on this subject; his presence in the drawing-room would be missed, so thrusting the supposed copy of the letter, which he had retained possession of, into his escritoire, he went down to join the party. The Lady Grace was not there, the laughing Carrie Mayflower had ceased to sing, others had been and were singing in her place, and the evening was waxing late; so on the first opportunity he withdrew and sought his chamber for the night.

When alone again, his mind reverted to the scene in the library, and to the girl he had left with an angry word on his lips, and he well knew from his previous knowledge of her truth, that in reality she was as much grieved as he was. Had she too retired for the

night to a sleepless pillow and unavailing tears? Was she, like he was, relenting the severity of her conduct, and wishing to recall even one little word she had made use of? She might be, and if he *could* only kneel by her side, and hear her say she would withdraw her belief in his baseness until he had time to elucidate the strange mystery that seemed to pronounce him guilty,—if he could attain to *that*, the world would yet hold for him an almost immortal pleasure. Alas! there was no commonplace or usual way left open for the speech he desired between him and the mistress of his heart; so lingering, loving, and even desperate in his distress, he resolved to approach her chamber when all the world was at rest, at least to exchange with her a few words of entreaty and reiterated and unbroken faith and affection. There might be, in that full mansion, danger in this well-intended attempt to assuage sorrow; but the mental picture of the distress that the Lady Grace *might* be in, the chance of her return to better judgment, her weeping eyes, her lovely lips parted by still succeeding sobs, and her dishevelled hair, all in all placed such a sad picture before him, that he resolved, when the hushed hours beyond midnight held their silent sway, to steal softly to that hallowed site, her bedroom, and to essay in speech, even a few words of comfort and a fervent prayer. At one time he thought of obtaining the aid of the kind, good-natured, light-hearted Carrie; but then she slept in her mother's room, so all commu-

nication with her was impossible. Nothing was left to him, then, in this exigency, but to seek Lady Grace's chamber, and at least to exchange with her a few words. With the light and cautious step of a wandering spirit, he stole forth into the dark and silent corridors. As he passed each door he listened for the deep breathings of slumber, giving assurance of safety, or for any noise that might occasion cause for discovery; but each door was fast, each room was hushed; so, lit by the light of a clear moon, on he passed until his hand touched the lock of the Lady Grace's door.

On the very threshold of that sweet room, where but a foot intervened between him and the sight of his love, he paused as if an "angel feared to tread" and he scarce could summon strength enough from that strong hand to turn the handle of the door. At last it turned slowly and cautiously, and it seemed to his ear as if there was some slight movement within that sacred chamber, and that the light of his life was not asleep, and perhaps not gone to bed. The door once opened, by the gleam of the night-lamp on the chimney-piece, and the dying embers in the grate, he looked into and advanced into the room cautiously, closing the door behind him, and with a palpitating heart approached the bed. Did the slight rustle that he had heard, proceed from her restless arms of snow as they tossed from side to side? Was she, too, courting in vain some restoration after the trials of the day? No; another

step and the snow-white bed was full in view, with the lovely face at rest upon the pillow in the midst of its splendid hair, that wreathed in seemingly distinctive folds, or delighted to rest in sweet contrast on the heaving and beautifully rounded breast beneath. The long silken eye-lashes were closed and resting on the cheeks, clinging still wet with tears, while crumpled in her small white hand was her handkerchief, attesting the relief the eyes had essayed to bring to the late phase of mental agony. Then came the worth of the mind or soul of man ascendant above all mortal desire or selfish wish, and the Master of Beverstone gazed on the form before him, as a perfection to be worshipped with the heart, not to be caressed by the arm or lip, and, but for the fear of awakening her, he would have taken a hand and prayed and wept over it, as if it had been an altar of supreme and adorable veneration. What if he had pressed those unresisting lips to his, loving him as he knew she once did, and believed that when she knew the truth she would still continue to do, might not, after all the pangs of threatened severance and anger, his caresses have been returned as they once were? It was a thought of intoxicating delight, but still he felt he dared not put it to the test. His desire was to comfort the broken-hearted, to solace the wound inflicted by false assumption and unhappy circumstance, to make the loved, the adored one, happy; but in her deep sleep she *was then* happy, happy for

the time, and in oblivion of all; why then should he disturb her in an attempt to mitigate the burden by which his own heart was crushed, and which attempt might fail? He gazed, but would *not* wake her. Had a single sigh of sorrow parted those dear lips, had but one tear have stolen from beneath the fast-closed lids, he would, he must, have touched her; but from her happy rest he turned, and felt a sort of comfort in knowing, that leaving her asleep, sleepless himself and alone in sorrow, he at least for the time being endured in solitude the weight of the heavy affliction.

He turned, and had nearly reached the door, when the long lashes he had so lately looked on lifted from their downy rest, and fixed their gaze on him. We have often known sleep assume its power in the midst of noise and confusion, and even under the brilliant strains of music, and when the surrounding noise suddenly subsides, then slumber breaks away, and full consciousness returns. In this case the inner life that never sleeps had felt the noiseless presence of the form beloved, and the Lady Grace returned to consciousness at the moment the Master of Beverstone passed and went from the portal of her room. She saw, and knew that he had been there.

No sooner had the door quietly closed behind him than a bright light from one on the opposite side of the corridor flashed full upon him, and from her chamber the figure of Mrs. Marem emerged, candle in

hand, prying spectacles and all, her withered lips alive, and set in a supercilious smile. Thus, then, in the sea-green views of Mrs. Marem, and coming from the room of the Lady Grace, the Master stood confessed, well-knowing that in things of this sort,—

> "That wheresoe'er her eyes of hatred darkly fell,
> Hope withering fled, and mercy sighed farewell."

At first he made a step in advance to approach and speak to this untimely apparition; but what explanation could he give, and what would this old lady and the censorious world believe? Besides, the old woman was in her night-dress, and, with a slight exclamation, she drew back and shut her door in the Master's face.

Here, then, was a cruel position! if not damning to him, still it might be the death-blow to the reputation of one whom he loved infinitely more than himself; and that it would be made the most use of in the cruellest way, he knew very well. All his intentions had been and were good; every thought or wish of his inmost life was to assuage the misery of his love, and to prove to her that she had wronged him, and that he was still deserving of her affections; but what use are all the best intentions of the heart,—what avails truth and virtue, if brought into hostile collision with falsehood, founded on circumstance, the judge a suspicious and willing-to-be-bitter world? At this moment, the Master of Beverstone hated himself for the rash act he had committed. There, in yonder room, had been sleeping

the innocent, the beautiful and good, the gentle, unconscious child of an impending misfortune, about to be created and cast upon her by him, and he saw no means by which he could extricate her from a misery he himself had originated. He had now heaped evil on an unhappy heart, and though he had been made to suffer, what the Lady Grace would have to undergo left all the pangs by which he had been assailed far, far in the long distance. He retired to his room, but could not forgive himself; sleep was out of the question; the anxiety as to what might happen kept him awake till it was time to rise, and then to repair to the breakfast-room.

At table he found his host and hostess, and all the other guests save three. The absent ones were the Lady Grace, Carrie Mayflower, and Mrs. Marem. Presently the door opened, and the latter old lady entered, spectacles and all; but she seemed to be in no way moved out of her wonted behaviour, and did not appear to recognise the presence of the Master of Beverstone. Then came the sprightly, ever-smiling Carrie Mayflower, her face more replete, if possible, than ever with soft and intelligent expression; and when her dove-like eyes fell on the Master of Beverstone's face, every feature she had seemed to light up with a peculiar joy, that, despite himself, and all he too well knew, seemed to pour solace into his sorrowing heart, and to afford him a relief, the origin of which he could

in no way account for. I must leave it to the reader to imagine the expression in Carrie's sweet eyes: it is far beyond the power of my pen to depict the language of the inner life, so prone to flash telegraphically from the soul to comfort the afflicted or distressed; but Carrie's eyes in this case were the windows of the soul, the index to her inner life, and without an audible word, they comforted the Master's spirit, looked into his breast and bid him not despair. Oh! when the eyes of women have in them so heavenly a power, why —why do the acts of man—why does his erring and mistaken heart ever give them to feel the bitterness of tears, or cause the softer nature of the gentler sex to be made hard by the iron hand of harshness, neglect, or jealousy, ill-treatment, or distrust.

Why or wherefore, he knew not, but a single glance from Carrie had the power to set his heart much more at ease than it was. Ere she assumed her seat at the table she advanced at once to her hostess, and while that stately lady kissed her cheek, she apologised for the non-appearance of the Lady Grace at breakfast on the score of temporary indisposition. Then, turning to the Master of Beverstone, to his surprise and pleasurable bewilderment, she added, "Grace desired me to give all sweet messages to you, and bade me tell you that she had a letter to show you from a mutual friend, and that if she feels not well enough to come down she will then entrust it to me."

When Carrie said this, she cast a sly but transient glance on Mrs. Marem to learn the effect produced on that old lady by the ruse she had adopted—it was only a ruse—but there was very little index to be seen as to the thought within, save a slight shrug of the shoulder and lifting of the eyebrow of the old lady, which meant to telegraph some slight surprise, if not disbelief, in Carrie's tale. Breakfast over, the party began to break up, some to the gun, some to horse and hounds, some to the music-room and fancy-work. Carrie walked into the conservatory, where, having given a furtive glance of considerable intelligence to the Master of Beverstone, she occupied, or seemed to occupy herself, in passing, with an exotic plant, and then stood an instant, as if to toy with a beautiful heath. The Master was soon at her side, and at once beheld at the root of the plant a letter to him in the well-known hand of the Lady Grace. Carrie saw him assume possession of it, and with a bright and encouraging look passed on, for other guests followed them, and there was no time for a word of explanation. To seek his hat and walk into the retired and silent woods, with, as he thought, joy in his hand, and consolation for his heart, was then the immediate proceeding of our hero. Flinging himself down beneath tangled blackthorn and blackberry, and shaded by gigantic beech and oak, the brain of the Master of Beverstone sought consolation, and found it, if he found it at all, in the following words :—

FROM THE LADY GRACE TO THE MASTER OF BEVERSTONE.

"So, then, it is all over, and through those few and commonplace words, the requiem of my short-lived happiness rings; but, before the tomb is closed in which my hope, my faith, and trust lie buried, memory goes back—*will* go back with a rapid tread to the hours spent in communion with you, and, as in a panorama, I see pass before my longing, lingering gaze the chief episodes of our history! Would that I could stay the fleeting picture, and thus restore you, even in fancy, to the place you so lately held; but it *must not be.* No; with a hand made firm by the duty which I owe to myself, you must be put away at once and for ever from my heart, and *then* my task will be to live on without allowing myself to enter the desecrated temple, the ruined shrine, before which I so lately worshipped with too perfect devotion!

"It may be that *you* will feel some sorrow in your banishment, but if I am doubtful on this point the fault lies not with me. I cannot but feel, and very bitterly too, how lightly you must have valued my regard when you played with it and lost it, as a child might lose a new toy! And for me—but, alas, where is my woman's dignity that it will not come to my aid even now? I should be able to feign indifference if I do not feel it; but I could never feign with *you.* I *have* put you from me, but even as those who have

just bid a guest 'good speed,' and have seen him start on his way gay, careless, and, perhaps, *at heart glad to depart,* return to the silent house and miss the absent one in a thousand familiar places, so I look into my empty heart and find there traces of *your* lost presence which will never be effaced while life remains.

"Again I acknowledge my weakness—utter weakness, for which you surely will despise me! I have lost you, but the remembrance of what has been, I would not efface if I could—why should I? Will it not be like a faint echo of past happiness to remember that *there was* a time when I thought you worthy of all the trust and devotion of which my heart was capable? Will it not brighten the lonely hours of my future life, during which, if we meet, it must be as strangers; when, if your voice addresses me, the soft inflexions of love will not make it music in my ears, to let 'the light of other days' shine around me, and throw upon the darkness of the *present,* the beautiful, if illusive and evanescent, radiance of the past?

"Why was I so happy? Why did I not take warning from the too frequent fall of women? Because I had faith—*faith supreme in you;* because I listened to that which I believed to be an instinct of nature, and which told me that you were incapable of deceiving one who gave implicit trust, and, against the evidence of my senses, I find myself sometimes trusting

you even still. I find it very hard to believe that the man who wrote to me as you wrote at the first strange beginning of our acquaintance is false—false to himself and to me.

"How well I remember the joy with which I used to read your replies to my letters! the delight, which made every pulse bound with a quickened throb, as I read the words which told me that I was understood and appreciated only too highly; which taught me that there *was* a world beyond that one of hollow conventionalism in which I lived, a world in which feeling, apart from passion, reigned! Yes, it was happiness to find that the hero of my girlish dreams existed; that the letters which fed me with such sweet food had been written by *his* hand, and that I had at last found one to cleave the solitude of my inner life.

"But the intercourse by letters did not content you; would that it had; you were urgent for a meeting, but in your heart you must do me the justice to acknowledge that I held back; I had a presentiment that, with our introduction the sweet calmness and security of our spirit communion would cease. But again I must be frank, as I have ever been with you; it was *for myself I feared.*

"It is nothing to the purpose *now* that, when at last we met, your fastidious taste *was* gratified. It might not have been, and the weakness of human nature

might have been mine alone. But it was not so. We met, and, mutually, our affection passed from the serene regions of friendship, as I now know you always intended it should do. I do not wish to imply that, against my will, I was drawn into the enchanted fairy land of love. No; with willing steps I followed my captor into that 'new world which is the old,' and I found every part of the way strewn with flowers, and happiness, far greater than I had ever dreamed of, surrounding me on every side. You knew that I was happy; it gave *you* happiness to make me so, you said, and it even seems to me now, in the bitterness of my outraged spirit, as though you took pleasure in filling 'life's goblet' over the brim with bliss, the most enchanting and complete, that *my* loss might be the greater when you ruthlessly dashed it from my lips.

"Why do I thus recall the days of sweet contentment which followed our meeting? Contentment may seem a *cold* word, but none other is so applicable to the feeling of quiet, unquestioning repose, which pervaded my being when I knew that I was loved by him to whom my whole heart was given. We were not always together—circumstances forbade us *that* bliss—but there was the 'little look across the crowd,' or the whispered word, or the fond clasp of the hand, and those little things, to one who trusted implicitly as I did, were enough; and then, when we were separated, our letters——but to write of them wounds my heart,

for in one little letter lies the poison of my world, the words in it traced in confidence by my own hand, you wielded as a sting against me. Again I ask myself *why* I recall these things? I recall them not that the remembrance may soften *me* towards *you*, but that it may harden me to the hardness of iron, and freeze me to the coldness of ice! I want to place before me, in their true colours, the *ideal* and the *real*, and to *make* myself admit that the man whom I loved was less noble than I believed him; to make the lover, who held me to his heart and stayed upon my lips the words which confessed that he was so dear, give place to the man who, before a crowd of the sneering and applauding companions of some midnight revel, read aloud, with boastful comments, the lines which had been dictated by a trusting heart, and written by a loving hand! As if *that* was not enough, you then rashly put it into the power of one of my own sex, who is but too prone to think and to speak all evil of those younger than herself, to whisper insinuations against me, nay, to charge me with affording you midnight access to my chamber; I cannot even think of this, hard and ice-like as I have induced myself to become, without tears of indignation. But I am glad to be able still, *in my aching heart*, to acquit you of forgetting what was due to me. I still believe that your motive in risking a visit to my room, in such a place as this, in the dead of night, was to tell me that the

harsh words you had used, when last we met, were not spoken from your heart, and to pray of me forgiveness for that which cannot, ought not, to be forgiven. How could you have acted so thoughtlessly, even in contrition or in an attempt to make me happy? You were more than thoughtless, you were cruel—selfish in the extreme. My words are harsh now, but my tortured spirit rebels at this *last* wound from you.

"When I think of what you have done, and when I remember the grave charge to which you may have subjected me, all softness vanishes, and I *am* able without faltering to tell you that great as my *love was*, my *scorn* is greater still. I *am* mistress of myself now, and I desire, nay I *command*, that every line I have ever written to you may be returned; I will not even trust you with their destruction. You have erred against me past the forgiveness which would restore us to each other; but when I remember bygone happy hours, which are *never* more to return, I cannot cherish undying resentment. So, before I say farewell for ever, let me assure you that I heartily forgive, and that I shall try to forget the conduct which has placed you so low in my esteem, and compelled me to withdraw my regard.

"Perhaps you do not *now* care for either my esteem or regard; then if so, you will have no regrets, you can go on *your* way with a light heart, and if ever the remembrance of Grace crosses your mind, you will

perchance just smile as you think that she was *but one* of *many* who had the honour for a time of attracting your notice. But why thus linger over a last farewell? As we gaze on a beautiful sunset, reluctant to turn away while one gleam of rosy light lingers upon mountain top, or wave, or cloud, knowing that although many another sunset just as beautiful may be seen by us, *that* special one never can again, so am I reluctant to turn my heart from all that made life beautiful to me. It *is* hard to close the volume in which so many sweet records are written, and to begin afresh, knowing that henceforth——But no more. I have already written too much, more, perhaps, than you will have patience to read; but you must forgive me, I did not intend that feeling should play so prominent a part in this—in this the *last* letter you will ever receive from one who was *once*, but for your own act and deed, unalterably and devotedly yours."

It is utterly impossible to describe or even to imagine the effect of this letter on its recipient. He held it in his hand outstretched before him, the muscles of that strong arm rigid, as if by some strange convulsion of nature man had been turned to stone. High-souled, high-hearted, high-minded as he was, he saw himself charged by the creature of his adoration, whose honour, state and station he loved better than his life, with the meanest attributes that could be

assigned to a boasting, vainglorious coward, or to the meanest wretch that could crawl upright, in position only, on the face of the earth, at the same time that he also knew he had not been guilty of the charges made against him. To stop any longer at the Abbey, or to refrain from seeking redress from the root of the evil wherever it grew, was out of the question, and with returning consciousness—for he had indeed been stricken out of immediate life by Lady Grace's letter—came the reflection that the presumed copy of the note that had done him all this mischief lay locked in his escritoire, a poisonous serpent only to be brought to light that venom might be analysed, and humanity saved, if possible, from further agony. He started to his feet, crushing through the underwood, and made his way to the Abbey; stayed not for question, nor reply; he did not even seek a word with Carrie; but leaving a few lines for his noble hostess, expressive of the most urgent business far away, he ordered post horses to his chariot, and was soon on his way to London. On that journey we must leave him, while we narrate further particulars respecting the Abbey.

When Carrie Mayflower placed the letter in the Master of Beverstone's hands, she was not then fully aware of all the circumstances surrounding Lady Grace, nor of the grave charges that very soon on that day found their way from Mrs. Marem to her hostess.

Rumours were afloat of something wrong, and the sudden departure of the Master added weight to considerable surmise; and it was then, as it has ever been before and since, youth and beauty, as well as age and ugliness, lent a listening ear to slanderous whispers, for—

> "Brighter things, in passing by,
> Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die;
> And every woe a tear may claim,
> Except an erring sister's shame."

And thus a rumour, wild, uncertain, but nevertheless damaging to one of the sweetest creatures in existence, grew on apace, till at last the spectacled witch who danced round *that* cauldron saw fit to bring the matter to a head, and after sundry hints from her, courting investigation, she told the hostess of the Abbey what she had seen on the previous night in the corridor.

There was no escaping then from further investigation reaching her in this tangible shape, the Lady of the Abbey in justice to herself and to the Lady Grace, and to the Lady Grace's relatives, found herself forced to make inquiry, and for that purpose she repaired to our heroine's room, where she found the beautiful girl, the image of graceful solitude and sorrow, lying stretched upon a sofa. They were alone, and the following conversation ensued.

"Grace," said her hostess, kindly taking the sufferer's hand, "I come to you on a very serious matter, a matter demanding explanation, and as to which you

must nerve yourself up to speak, for these things must not be permitted to gain strength through impunity, they must be grappled with, and *if possible* set at rest. There is a rumour afloat, confirmed now by Mrs. Marem, that in the dead of night, when all others were at rest, the Master of Beverstone was seen to steal with caution from your chamber. To my knowledge you cannot have met the Master since the previous dinner. I ask you was he in your chamber last night?"

The Lady Grace had risen from her recumbent position, and now sat upright, pale, but wonderfully self-possessed and firm, even her breathing could not be heard, or the rise and fall of her bosom seen, and in a steady concentrated tone she simply uttered the word "Yes."

"Then in the name of heaven, child, how came he there? He was seen to leave your chamber by Mrs. Marem, and you are lost if you cannot in some way or other show that his presence there was without your concurrence. He, the Master, is well regarded by the world, by all men worth knowing, as well as by me, and he is not the man to intrude himself in a lady's chamber without her consent, or some especial cause. Tell me then, and tell me the truth, as I am sure you will, how came he in your chamber at that hour? You have said that you knew he *was* there, —explain it, if you can."

"He was here without my knowledge, save that I saw him as he left the room," replied the Lady Grace, in the tone of voice and in the self-possession as previously described.

"Did you not hold converse with him?"

"No. I must have been asleep when he entered, for I knew nothing of his presence, save as I have told you."

"Then what was he doing there? You have no one to speak to this fact but yourself, no one to bear testimony to the nature of his visit. My dear child, though I may believe all you say, the more than suspicious world will not do so, and much I fear will come of this most unfortunate affair. That you have done no wrong I am sure; in my mind, my love, *you* are above all suspicion; but at present the Master of Beverstone does, through his apparent conduct to you, labour under one of the gravest charges that can be made against a soldier and a gentleman. I cannot account for it; presumptive evidence and, apparently, facts are against him; still, knowing him as I do, and being very well aware of his sincere and devoted attachment to you, I cannot, will not believe him guilty."

The Lady Grace sat firm as a rock through everything else, but when she heard the Master thus kindly spoken of by their most sincere friend, and heard that friend to whom she had ever looked up from childhood even doubt his guilt, all firmness deserted

her, and in an agony of tears she threw herself on the neck of her hostess. At that moment a knock at the door came, and my Lady's maid brought the note left by the Master of Beverstone to account for his sudden departure.

Here then was another link, for good or for evil, in the chain so mystified, and in an instant the question occurred to the mind of the noble hostess, was this abrupt departure caused by guilt or innocence, by reluctance to attempt to refute the rumour of being in Lady Grace's room, or a resolve to repair to London and to the club, in search of the originator of the charge against him? Ought he not to have remained with Lady Grace to protect her from blame, as he knew by her letter that insinuations derogatory to her character were afloat, instead of flying from the scene, and leaving the world to come to its own conclusions, certain always to be against the weaker sex? The exhausted and speechless state of the graceful sufferer, still clinging to her neck, afforded time for thought, and then it struck her that the Master of Beverstone might have left the Abbey before the direct charge made by Mrs. Marem, and the innuendoes alone had reached him. Besides, what could he do against an old woman? Assertion against assertion was nothing. Of course those charged with a midnight meeting in a bedroom would utterly deny all impropriety; so, had he stayed, resistance on such terms could only have

made a noise, and noise in such cases as these should ever be avoided, for noise, or the merest report of evil, but too frequently, or indeed invariably, confirms the worst opinions of *the world.*

These thoughts had just time to occur to the Lady of the Abbey, when Grace recovered sufficiently from her excess of sorrow, and asked her friend at once to refer to the Master of Beverstone for further explanation ; "His motives," she said, "in coming to her room, despite of all she knew against him as to the letter and the club, she was sure arose from some kind, but no improper feeling, and he could at once clear her of all complicity."

"But, my child," replied her companion, "he has left the Abbey ; he is gone no one knows where, but, as he says, 'on urgent business ;' it is thus this note informs me. Calm yourself, bear up against this accumulation of evil ; I will see that unhappy old woman again, and Carrie Mayflower, who I know delivered to the Master of Beverstone a letter from you ; it is that that may have made him take this sudden step, for he is not the man to bear an undeserved wrong, nor to let the happiness of one he loves be interfered with."

Thus saying, the hostess of the Abbey gently replaced Lady Grace upon the sofa, kissed her affectionately, and repaired to her own boudoir, whither she sent for Mrs. Marem and for Carrie Mayflower.

Mrs. Marem, brisk as a bee on the matter in hand, and wide awake for further mischief, was the first to obey the summons, and she sat down stiff and rigidly upright, an ancient sign-post of unsolicited virtue, and innocence in decay.

"I have sent for you, Mrs. Marem, on this very unpleasant affair in regard to the Lady Grace and the Master of Beverstone, which to my mind had better not have reached any other ears than mine. Grace is with me and in my charge, and to me alone had the tale better have been told. She admits that she saw the Master as he left her room, but she denies that conversation of any sort passed between them. What he was doing in her room, or why he should have gone there, is another thing, and in my opinion rests with himself; I am convinced that my dearest Grace had no more to do with the impropriety of the visit than I had myself."

At this moment Carrie Mayflower entered the boudoir, in time to catch the last words of her hostess, but she seated herself without saying a word, as demure as a little kitten, and the Lady of the Abbey continued.

"I repeat," she said, "that I am certain Grace knew not of the Master's rash and untimely visit."

"It will be *vary* difficult, I fear, to *pursuade* the world of *that*, when the world have seen how much these young people are attached to each other; they

certainly were in that chamber alone together," replied Mrs. Marem, shaking her head at the risk of losing her spectacles. "What I saw with my own eyes I saw, and such things cannot be concealed, nor should they, for wickedness ought to be reproved."

At this time Carrie's demureness left her, and she seemed as if she sat on thorns, her usually merry and smiling eyes seemed suddenly to have grown larger, as they stared at Mrs. Marem; but still she contrived to be silent until she saw the fitting time for words in defence of her dear friend.

"Yes," Mrs. Marem continued, "the world will not believe that the Lady Grace is *un*compromised; the words, the mere assertions of the guilty parties themselves go for nothing; they will say anything, and there is no one to guarantee the truth of their mere excuses, or to witness the propriety or impropriety of their conduct while they were thus together."

Up jumped Carrie, with such a bound from her chair to her pretty little feet as made Mrs. Marem start, and her spectacles tumble and break upon the floor.

"There *is* some one to guarantee what took place in Grace's room last night, *for I was there*," she exclaimed, with a vehemence quite unusual with her. "*I was there the whole time.* I had tried to comfort poor darling Grace, and exhausted with her tears she had fallen asleep, when, on hearing the handle of the door softly turn, I thought it was my mamma come to insist on my

sitting up no longer, so I slipped behind the curtain of the bed, not wishing my mamma to find me and take me away; and thus I was present all the time that the Master remained in the room. He said nothing, he did not awake Grace; and so set, so grave was every feature in his face, I thought he was walking in his sleep. After looking at Grace some little time, he turned away as softly as he came in, and just as he reached the door my darling friend awoke."

The bright expression of joy that mingled with the Lady of the Abbey's brighter tears were in very strong contrast to the pale and disappointed dry look of Mrs. Marem, as she turned a crabbed face on this pretty, but thoroughly unexpected, vindicator of truth and innocence; and for a moment nothing more was uttered, as the Lady of the Abbey took Carrie in her arms and kissed her. Then she turned to Mrs. Marem and said,

"After all this, and the *rather* hasty opinion you had formed in regard to the occurrences in question, Mrs. Marem, you, I am sure, will see that your stay in the Abbey cannot be comfortable to you. I have no doubt but that you have more pleasurable invitations elsewhere; and whereas I must dedicate nearly all my time to the soothing of my dear girl, who has been sadly wronged, you will arrange your departure, I am sure, at your own time?"

Mrs. Marem rose from her seat, with the rigidity befitting the occasion; and, with a glassy scowl from her

unaided eyes at the once more smiling Carrie, she withdrew from the boudoir of her hostess, to take a very hasty departure.

It was not long before the hostess and Carrie Mayflower were with the Lady Grace, and talking the matter over.

"Ay!" said Carrie, "and you will see, the Master of Beverstone never was guilty of the charge brought against him; he is incapable of doing such a thing as reading a lady's confidential letter to his boon companions at the club; and you will see he will never rest till he clears the matter up and makes you, my dearest Grace, love him more than ever! If he finds out the author of the evil he has been forced to bear, won't he just about pitch into him!"

"Hush, my dear Carrie. Where did you get this strange idiom of phraseology? From your brothers, I suppose. Alas! alas! If he did not divulge the contents of Grace's note, but destroyed it when read, whence came the exact copy of her communication? I confess I see no favourable method of elucidation."

CHAPTER II.

During the journey of the Master of Beverstone from the Abbey to London, he had time to revolve in his mind all the unpleasant circumstances that had lately happened. He remembered, too, the thoughts that gladdened him on his journey down from London, on that very road; far different were they from those that harassed him now! Then, in those happier hours, his heart—his "inner life"—was exalted and cheered and kept from weariness of time and distance by dwelling on one lovely face, one graceful figure, one soft voice, and the sweet and smiling lips and eyes that gave and expressed for him the most trusting love.

Love, Heaven-sprung gifts and bliss so beautiful, never perhaps to shine on him again!

He had left those eyes, once so bright with affection for him, suffused with bitterly upbraiding and angry and sorrowful tears, and the hitherto soft lips breathing harsh murmurs towards him, instead of gentle sighs sweeter than the ambrosial dews or airs of heaven. Strong in limb and life, intellect and spirit, a difficulty the most perplexing and miserable surrounded him. Appearance dead against him, and conclusions come to by those he loved on damning premises, awarding to him a guilt from which his inmost soul shrank with a horror that even shook the very foundation of his brain.

It is the fashion for people to prate of love, to feign affection, and to swear they will never change; but how often do we see the nice girl to whom such things are enacted and said, simply treated as a pretty flower? Plucked for decoration, petted while the first bloom lasts, never sufficiently appreciated, and ultimately flung away to waste and wither in any hands to which adversity may subsequently induce her. The Master's love was not *such love as this!* It was of a higher and a more romantic cast, clothed in unusual, uncommon hues, and sprung from the mind and "inner life," not from any personal craving for possession of an admired object seen by the longing eye; and as the foundation of his love had been mysterious and beautiful, so was the *un*trembling structure that had grown upon it,—a passion, if it could be called a passion, shorn of every brutal feeling inherent in the mortal breast, refined and godlike in its superb unselfishness, and lasting as the heavenward sun. Yet this true and high-toned heart stood charged with the worst of vices: that of boasting of the love of woman, that of holding her up to revelling companions to incite their scorn, and increase his individual character for success; and, though last not least, for attempting to approach her at a time when even his shadow might have ruined her for ever.

He felt all this, and as the horses to his carriage felt the spur in obedience to his reiterated command to

make all haste to town, so was he aware of the goad within, that kept urging him on to the spot where yet he hoped to elucidate the lie, and fix the fault on the wretch who somehow or other had been able to make him all this misery. In the breast-pocket of his coat there yet lay in its folds the adder that had stung him, the letter that the Lady Grace had spasmodically snatched, and kept, from the hand of Mrs. Marem. It was detestable to look at for one instant, and yet he did so frequently, as if to assure himself that the hand was not disguised, though the contents of that letter were marked "most private, confidential, and to be destroyed." "Confidential," the recipient of that letter had kept not to that direction, for in the most poisonous way she had bruited the contents of the epistle to the world. The Master of Beverstone, then, was in no way bound to keep the matter private, any more than a Justice of Peace, or any one else, would be bound to keep private a similar cautious communication from a murderer, who chose to take them into a confidence illegal and unsolicited, and calculated to conceal the most detestable of crimes from the punishment assigned by law.

The journey over, and the Master returned to London, there being yet time for it, he at once repaired to his club, and saw a very intelligent porter, who attended in the hall, and who, on the last day of his being at the club previous to his journey to the Abbey,

had waited on him, and delivered to him the letter from the Lady Grace, the surreptitious copy of which the Master held in his hand.

In calling to the remembrance of the porter the last day of his visit to the club, he asked him if he was perfectly certain of the day, and who else was in the club the same time that he was, and what facts there might be that impressed the circumstances on his recollection.

The man replied that he remembered the day very well, and the delivery of the letters to the Master upstairs, and that the day was particularly remarkable to him on account of London and the club on that day being so empty. "If you recollect, sir," he continued, "you and one other gentleman were the only members of the club in it at the same time; and I think you can't be off of recollecting it, for you and that gentleman spoke to each other up-stairs."

"I neither saw nor spoke to anybody that day," replied the Master, "so you are not correct in what you tell me."

"Well, sir," replied the porter, "leastways, I thought you did, for the gentleman stopped for some seconds immediately behind your high-backed arm-chair, if he did not look over it, and, in course, I thought you were speaking to each other."

A light broke at once upon our hero's mind, and seemed to raise the dark curtain that oppressed him.

"Who *was* that *gentleman*, then?" he asked, in as careless a manner as he could assume.

"Mr. Spitam, sir; he has been here this evening, but is gone. I know he is staying in town, for he wrote a note, to be sent to its address, for the answer to which he was to call at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Where is the note?"

"There, sir, on the table where the letters are always put."

Advancing to that table, but ere he touched the note left by Mr. Spitam, he took from his pocket the odious letter, and calling to the porter, he asked him if he knew Mr. Spitam's handwriting.

"Yes, sir, very well, sir," replied the man; "I could swear to it;" taking up one note from among several others which lay on the table, "this is Mr. Spitam's note, sir; I know his hand as well as my own."

"Whose writing, then, is this?" the Master said, showing him the letter in his hand, and the words "private and confidential, to be destroyed."

"That, sir, why that is Mr. Spitam's, sir; could swear to it among a thousand; the C, sir, and the D, sir, you see, are the same; but it's all his, as plain as the number on a street door."

"And he is to be here to-morrow morning at eleven, is he? Very well, then, I know where to write to him, that is all I wish, as I am going out of town."

The Master of Beverstone then went forth into the

street resolved on serious retribution, but lighter in heart, higher in spirits, than he had been for many hours.

By half-past ten the following morning he was at the club, and while there he stood in a little ante-chamber, isolated from the rest of the house, as a room in which the members might wash their hands or hang up their coats, umbrellas, or hats. He had not been there long when his ear detected some ascending steps from the street, and Mr. Spitam, whom he knew by sight, came in at the hall door. The Master of Beverstone met him at once, and accosting him as little abruptly as possible, asked for "a moment's conversation with him," and pointing to the little ante-chamber, motioned him in, followed, and taking the key from the lock, locked the door on the inside.

It all was done so unexpectedly and quickly, that Mr. Spitam had barely time to think, though the suddenly assumed ashen hue of his cheek bespoke some degree of nervousness; but when he heard the door locked behind him, he turned round with some effrontery, and faced the tall, portentous frame and looks of the Master of Beverstone. Mr. Spitam was by no means a little man, and in age he was not much or many years older than our hero; so there was no apparent reason why he should not protect himself against an enemy in any way that by any possibility might offer.

"Mr. Spitam," said the Master, "I will come very

quickly to the cause of the conduct which you see. Here, sir, is a letter in your handwriting; it was addressed to Mrs. Marem, a lady of your acquaintance, and it purports to be the copy of a letter addressed to me, which I am said to have boasted of, and read aloud at this club, to my companions. I am not in a position to charge you with the utterance of that unmitigated falsehood, as to reading and boasting, but I am with the fact of your having looked over the back of the armed chair in which I was seated, and covertly possessing yourself of the contents of the letter, short as it was, then in my hand, noting those contents down, and enclosing them to Mrs. Marem. Here, sir, look at your own handwriting, you cannot gainsay the charge I make against you."

"That letter, sir, in your hand, is marked private and confidential," Mr. Spitam said, with some degree of firmness. "I decline to answer any questions respecting it, or your right to proceed on it. Give me the key of the door, sir, and send your friend to me, and to our mutual friends we must leave the matter."

"No, sir, you do *not* escape me in *that* way," replied the Master; the man who sneaks up to the back of a chair, and reads and takes down the words of a lady's letter, with the contents of which he can have nothing to do, in my opinion forfeits all gentlemanlike consideration. I treat you now as I would treat a pickpocket, or the traducer of fair fame, and I insist—and mean at

once to have it—on all the redress it is in your power to give me for an atrocious act, to which there can be no defence whatever. The door is locked; if you think you can possess yourself of the key, you may try to do so; but if you put me to the use of carnal weapons, by heavens! I will show no more mercy to you than you have done to others; so take your choice; here is the key, take it if you can; *or*, it is, sir, the alternative, here are pens and ink, sit down at the table and write the letter I will dictate."

Mr. Spitam for an instant stood irresolute. Perhaps he listened to see if any assistance was at hand, but he could hear of none likely to avail him much. He sat down, therefore, and wrote as the Master of Beverstone dictated.

"I, Edward Spitam, herein acknowledge that I crept to the back of the chair in which the Master of Beverstone was seated at his club, reading a letter, that I noted the contents of that letter, and quietly retired and wrote them down. That I then sent them to my relative, Mrs. Marem. I never heard that the Master of Beverstone either read or boasted of *that* letter in the club, nor to any one of his acquaintance; and *that* report, if such a report exists, did not emanate from me. I deeply regret my conduct on that occasion, and beg the forgiveness and pardon of the Lady whose letter I thus made use of. EDWARD SPITAM."

"There, sir," exclaimed the Master, folding up the letter, and putting it in his pocket, "your confession is but a poor redress for the misery your wretched act has occasioned me; but it is all the atonement *you* can make; the door is open, sir, *now*, and you may depart. I will see you to the street, and for a moment change places with you and become the aggressor. You having made me all the amends in your power for the vile injury you committed, and having *talked* of 'satisfaction,' and a reference to 'mutual friends,' during our recent interview, I will now give you a cause for war, apart from any former quarrel."

At this moment they had reached the street door, when the Master of Beverstone, applying his foot to Mr. Spitam, propelled him violently on to the pavement, the impetus of the kick sending him on his knees into the gutter.

"Better not do that again," Mr. Spitam muttered, as he rose from his knees, amidst the laughter, stares, and sneers, of the passers-by, and walked off with anything but a lofty step; the Master, having called to him that he would await any message he had to send for the next twelve hours, and that time having expired, felt himself then at liberty to return to the Abbey, and, as he trusted, to the reinstatement of the good opinion of her whom he loved beyond all things on earth.

Again "the first and second turns out," at the same

inns—they were not called hotels in those days—hastened his travelling chariot on its way, and after some hours he arrived at the Abbey.

On his way thither he had pictured to himself his own dear love, the beautiful Lady Grace, no longer in tears, no longer doubting his unfailing fidelity and honour, but receiving him with smiles and open arms, with a kiss that would repay his many long, long hours of pain! Somehow or other as he drove up to the gothic portal of the Abbey, anxiety approaching to gloom, or to a foreboding of evil, smote his breast, and, when he descended from his carriage, he feared to ask after the health of the Lady Grace. He was soon ushered into the presence of his noble hostess, in whose boudoir was seated the laughter-loving Carrie Mayflower, but the face of both portended gloom, chastened to some extent by curiosity to know the upshot of his visit to London.

"Where is Grace, my dear lady, where is Grace?" exclaimed the Master, as he took first the hand of his hostess, and then that of Carrie Mayflower.

"She has left me and gone home," was the reply; and the Master almost sank upon the floor.

"Gone!" he replied; "gone—gone still with an evil thought on me; still under the belief that I had sported with the best feelings of her heart, and wronged her past redemption; oh, good God, have I lived for this additional misery, and *has* my woe *no* termination!"

"Here, here!" he cried, taking from the breast of his coat the confession of Mr. Spitam, "here, let this prove to you, my dearest friends, *that I am innocent* of the grave charges brought against me, and that the vile conspirators stand confessed." As he said this he placed the paper on the table before the noble Lady of the Abbey, who at once read it, and, rising, put her arms around the Master's neck and kissed him, as did Carrie Mayflower too. Those kisses an angel in heaven would have sanctioned: forgiveness and joy, congratulation, and regret that any circumstances or appearances should have made them for one moment doubt the manly worth and honour of their friend, or the innocence of Lady Grace, were mingled in them, and the Master of Beverstone *knew* that he was reinstated in the high position at the Abbey he for ever desired to hold. But where was she whose gentle ear he most wished to fill with the news of his undoubted clearance of everything that was wrong—where was she? Not there where the misery had occurred; not there to receive and tell him that she restored him to her best affections; *not there*, where his triumph would have been most valued, but miles on miles away; and ere communication could reach her, still a prey to bitter thoughts, still in tears, and doubting his faith and honour. The higher powers at her parental hall were opposed to the Master of Beverstone in some sense, and between him and her there was, therefore,

a difficulty of communication; but still one that *he hoped* might be overcome.

To his fair friends at the Abbey so far, then, he left his cause; and when did woman fail to communicate with woman, or to promote the happier feelings of the sex when cruel usage, and mean, and cowardly, and unhandsome deeds had driven pleasure from the breast and suffused the eyes with tears!

At the Abbey, the Master's fame, re-established, stood as high as ever. We have yet to follow his fortune to the temple that held his deity, to the hall, to the home, of the Lady Grace.

Though "lightly falls the foot of time that treads alone on flowers," still, as fast, if not as lightly, speed the heavy hours away, whose leaden hoofs, so to speak, are clogged with the clay-like fetters of misfortune. Time tarries not, 'tis here, 'tis there, and its tide sweeps on and away the destinies of life, and in its vortex dashes all human hope, each mortal tendency and intention, into the nothingness of thoughtless dust. As Shelley so beautifully expresses it,

> "Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity
> Until death tramples it to fragments."

Some time had elapsed since the scenes I have recounted, and the reader now must accompany me to the County of —— and to the hall of the Lady Grace.

CHAPTER III.

THE summer had bloomed its ripest hours away, and waned into the arms of a loving and lusty autumn. As a long-wooed bride, the fulness of nature sank into the yellow or golden tint of maturity, and blushed in every field, in every berry, and on every bough, to find herself so heartily bestowed. The birds of song sat hushed in the fulness of satiety, none but the robin, whose little bosom heaved beneath the reddened hue that peeped from between his russet garb, gave note of song. Nought rang through the healthful, quiet, sweetened air, but the shouts of a lusty harvest-home, or the unusually merry chime of all the village bells. Here, there, and everywhere, the near or the far, but ever merry chimes, broke out, and God's blessing seemed to have descended on the too often erring world.

What step, what form is that that comes so lightly and so blithely down that grassy glade? the falling acorn seems to pause in deference to that graceful head! Has that lovely face caught from the lord of light the brightness of his rays, or does the bosom's lord sit so lightly on his throne beneath that snow-white breast that its own sun, its innate heartfelt happiness, rules as lord of all? It *is* the Lady Grace! No grief sits *now* on those sweet, lofty, and expressive

features ; no tear dims *now* the lustre of those lovely eyes, nor weighs heavy on those long lashes that once rested on the pallid cheek, as we have seen, wet with the dews of pain. On she came, as no doubt some of us have seen a Lady Grace come, the very perfection of beauty, not wearing alone the charm of limb, but clothed in that indescribable all-in-all of gentle perfection which so charms the refined admirer, and weans his mortal passion, his desire, from the mortal coil, and raises it to the unsullied worship of a deity. She came, her light and elastic step scarce leaving its trace upon the grass, and, basket in hand, she called around her her pets, her pheasants, and her birds, as had been her wont, ere the love of her "inner life" had awaked from its dream into what had been for a time a sad passion of reality. She sat down, but had not been seated long before the blithe whistle of an old and valued servant once more reached her ear, and the faithful keeper, Tilter, stood before her, and, for some reason or other, hat in hand, he wished her "joy and happiness!"

"Thank you, my good old friend," she said, "these *are* happy times, the election for the county seems to promise well, and all is as we wish. My pets are thriving, thanks to your constant care in my absence; and what with the ample harvest and the weather, this is really an occasion for a public thanksgiving."

"Ah, my lady, to be thankful is a very good thing,

as I often says to my old wooman. I says, sis I, mother, says I, you ought to be thankful for having a good husband, that's me, what's never without a bit of good bacon in his house, and a word in season too, to make ye do your duty; but she never seems to see it, and b'ant a thankful like as she has good ought to be, but thinks her dooty and the bacon would be all acured the same without me. I be thankful though to your leddyship's kindness, and for the good health like I have so long enjoyed."

"Well you may be thankful, my good Tilter; I can't remember to have heard that you ever *were* ill," replied the Lady Grace, "and you look robust and hearty now. Were you ever ill?"

"Yes, 'spose I was once, my leddy; at least I seemed to feel out of sorts like and sleepy out at nights when I wanted to be a-watching; so I goes to Doctor Russumut and asks whatever ailed me.

"'Not much,' said the doctor; 'here, Mr. Tilter, take these pills to-night when you goes to bed, or whenever you *does* go to bed, as I supposes as you do *sometimes* get there, and you'll be all right in a twinkling.' Well, I carries home the little box: it didn't seem much for a tall man like I to take, but when I gets home I feels better, 'twas the sight on 'em may be, so I puts the pill-box up atop of the hanging of my bed and forgets all about 'em. There they bided for near two years, and then I seems a little off the hooks again; so,

thinks I, 'I'll do it this time, at all events, before the malady, as they calls it, has time to run away like a red-leg partridge, along of itself;' so I takes the pills, a thinking if ever they had any good in 'em it must have got better than good by keeping, as I have heard the butler say the wine does; but there were four on 'em as big as double Bs, two to be taken each night. I takes 'em all, and thinks if two could do good, four would do better, but I'm blessed, my lady, if ever I felt anything of 'em at all; old as I had kept 'em to be, I might just as well have taken nothing."

"Where did you get those rats you have in your hand?" asked Lady Grace.

"I caught 'em, my leddy, at your aviary of gold-pheasants. According to things I sees upon the paper, my leddy, I did wrong; the time I think's a coming on when them fools of professors and philosophers will say as we didn't ought to kill vermin, because Natur', perhaps they'll say, made one thing to eat up another jest to keep a wholesome balance 'twixt good and bad. So rats and mice keeps down the corn, which, but for sich-like vermin, would be too much for the land, and breed disease and famine. We'd get, belike, too much to eat."

"Why do you call professors and philosophers fools, Tilter? they are supposed to be wise and learned men."

"Because, my leddy, they talks of what they don't understand, and a fool can't do no worse. They thinks by hearsay, which the bench says isn't evidence, and

they speaks out of their own ignorant imaginings statements on what country people have pumped into 'em like. By the time we reaches the year 1869, if we live long enough, I thinks as they'll be after recommending the preservation of vermin—hawks, kites, crows, pies, jays, stoats, weasels, and rats, and mice, and ticks, and fleas—as the best friends to man, woman, and child, the gamekeeper and the gun. They'll say the first of them lot of vermin is good and healthful to the game, and then the rats to keep down the corn, and the mice to grub up the acorns in the young plantations. So on it will go; the insects come next.

'The little fleas have lesser fleas
Upon their backs, as bite 'em,
The smaller fleas have lesser fleas,
And so on, *ad finitem*;'

or some sitch words, as I have heerd my old master say, and all must be preserved, fleas, ticks, beaks and claws, teeth and nails, and what not, the bad as well as good, as them fools of professors may say to keep the just balance like of Natur'. Oh my! saving your leddyship's presence, them philosophers and t'others knows no more of what they speechifies about than the archicological wiseacres and their president did, as I told ye, my leddy, of his reverence's, Mr. Crispin's, shovel hat.

"I knowed a passon, my leddy, as was a travelling, and, losing his luggage, he exclaims to a fellow-passenger,—

'I've lost my pocmanty.'

His friend says,—

'I pities your grief.'

The passon says,—

'But my sermons are in it.'

His friend says,—

'I *pities the thief.*'

Well, my leddy, this too was a good passon, but not quite the best passon as I ever knowed—there's many good uns, though—but he certainly had made the most of his time in this world."

"Why, Tilter," rejoined the Lady Grace, "how had *he* made the most of *his* time?"

"Just as this, my leddy. His reverence met me one day at the churchyard gate. Says he, 'My good friend,' says he, 'why beant you never at church?'

"Says I, 'Your reverence, sir,' says I, 'it aint my dooty to go there.'

"'Not your dooty?' says he, 'it's every man's dooty. The saving of your soul's your dooty, and if you don't come to church I would not give much for the chances of a better world for you.'

"'Now,' says I, 'sir, will your reverence answer me this. Is it our dooty or not to do good to our feller critturs?'

"'Undoubtedly,' says his reverence, 'to love our neighbour and to do him all the good we can is a part of our blessed doctrine.'

"'Then, sir, you likes to see a lot on 'em at church?'

"'Yes,' says he, 'the more the better. What's that to do with you?'

"'Well then,' says I, 'I'm the good Christian, for I goes a sacrificing myself to do my neighbours good; I can't say much about the love we bears one another; but I stays out of church to keep others in, for if I was in three parts of your congregation would be poaching and thieving, or playing pitch and toss in the bye-lanes, so I'm the best dog your reverence has got to drive the sheep into the fold on ye. It's maybe I'se doleful like when I be out of hearing of you, but 'scuse me, your reverence, I've heard though you always goes to church, you've had more heavy like inflictions than I have, as seldom goes. Be so bold, sir, but you've had three wives, while I have had but one.'

"'Ah!' replies his reverence, 'it is so, Mr. Tilter; you be right, my trials *have* been great. I've been married three times, but they be all dead now. The first time I wedded for money, the next time for looks, and the third time—the third time—ah! I won't let a bad word pass *my* lips. Yes, I may truly say I've married the 'world, the flesh, and the *dey*vil,' for my last venture in that way was, my good friend, to say no worse, summot promiscous.'

"His reverence was a good old soul, my leddy, and he was apt to 'drawl out his words like the way he called the old 'un, but I never liked a passon much better than I did he."

"Why, Tilter, you *ought* to be a good Christian, if a knowledge of the clergy could make you so."

"Well, my leddy, I've mostly run up agin them spiritual doctors, as I've heard 'em called; but be so bould, my leddy, I'll tell y' someat about his honour?"

"Well, Tilter, go on; I know that if *you* tell it, it's nothing in his dispraise, I'm sure of that."

"No, my leddy, God forbid it should. Well, my leddy, he was a sailing about in his yacht, a sein and a trawl aboard as usual, and he runs his ship into one of them seaport towns, in the harbour of which he intended to fish. It was a pretty big place, I have heard him say, but not much frequented by gentlemen like himself. There wasn't much society there; 'twas a capital place, though, for fish, and the folks that lived there or thereabouts was in trade, but in course there was others, or what they called the 'gents' of the place, as guve themselfs uncommon airs, and come out when in their best like swells of the first order. Well, my leddy, his honour's yacht was a-lying off and on while he went to see if he could find a suitable lodging, as he intended like to stay fishing there for some little time. He goes down a street, and he sees up in the windows, several houses to be let, 'furnished;' so he goes up to the doors on 'em and knocks, but, my leddy, duce a bit could he get anyone to answer, they was all out on one conundrum or another. 'The brothers and sisters of the Band of Hope' were out

a tea-drinking, and ranting or speechifying, and a kissing in the ring, as they won't let 'em dance, in the sunshine, and a tousling, and tussling, and gin drinking in the shade, so 'twarnt likely to find any maid servant at home. As the master turns away from the doors, he sees a big swell a coming down the street, got up, so the master said, within an inch like of the life on 'im, his hat cocked upon three hairs, and stuck a one side his head, his hair all brushed out on the uncovered part of it, as if 'twas natral, as it warn't: one arm stuck a-kimbo, and in t'other hand a bright yeller gold-headed cane, which he flourished and twirled about conspicorusly. As he walked he twisted from side to side with a kind of boastful dignity. This was too much for the master to pass without getting a rise out on it. Up he goes to the swell, and says he in his civillest manner. 'Tell me, sir, if you please, what rent you ask for that house?' pointing to one of those into which he could obtain no admission.

"'Why do you ask me, sir?' said the dandified like swell; 'how can I tell you the rent of it, it don't belong to me?'

"'Oh, I begs your pardon, sir,' says the master. 'You was a walking in such a way, that I *really thought* the whole street belonged to you.'

"'D—d—d—d—d—damn,' said the dandy, eying the master's height and length of limb, and a choaking

himself off some wild word, a feared 'tis like of the consequences on it, and while he was a standing and a getting smaller every minute, the master he walks coolly away."

"That is a very amusing anecdote, Tilter, and one I like. Any thing else? I don't want you to go yet, for I fear one of my Carolina ducks is not well."

"I be glad to stay, my leddy, as long as ever you wishes it; my time's my own, that is, leastways it is your leddyship's. I ain't made the most of *my* time as the passon did with his three wives. He was a real good parish priest, he called in to see every body, and wouldn't hear of no young lady friends a ambleing about with him, and a carrying bags as they ought to be ashamed on. No, he did his dooty like a upstanding man; and them cunning ippocrites as only prays when the passon's nigh and can hear 'em, or when 'em gets transported, makes believe to be good, to get a ticket-of-leave, and come back again to rob more than ever. No, not a man jack on 'em could deceive the Rev. Mr. Wrestler, he know'd 'em all too well. He—he—he, my leddy, I carnt help laughing at what I heard the master tell a friend of his'n what was said by a passon's superior officer like."

"What was it, Tilter?"

"Why, my leddy, it was at what they calls the vice regal lodge in Ireland, at a grand dinner given by my Lord Carslile, and while the gentlemen were at

their wine; says my lord, says he, 'so highly do I think of that ere ticket-of-leave system, that had I my way I wouldn't have a servant in my establishment that warn't a returned convict.'

"'Then,' says his grace, Whately, I think was his name, Archbishop of Dublin, who was one of the company, 'then, my lord,' says he, 'you would get up some fine morning and find yourself *the only spoon in the house.*'"

"To change the subject, Tilter, to things under your care, what do you find the most difficult thing to manage?"

"A wife, my lady."

"I did not mean a human creature, but why a wife?"

"Because, my lady, she's got a tongue, and is very apt to give it when we don't want a nise. Innocent like, if she doesn't pester her old man, she's like enough to go a-talking to old women till all gets blab'd about. It's the tongue what spoils all. Lords and gentlemen out a shooting *will* talk, and though they spends fortunes to give to themselves and their friends good sport, they does the very thing that sets all expenditure at naught, and spoils the entire project on 'em. Silence out shooting is the key like to success, it costs nothing, it's cheap, and yet lords and gentlemen can't hush up their tongues for the very lives and souls on 'em, silence being cheap, t'ant regarded as nothin'. A

keeper's wife should have no tongue at all, she should be like a chamber mute; for if she speaks of what her husband does, when he goes out, when he comes in, when he gets up, without his a-knowing of it, there's no saying what she *may* put her foot into. Women folks, like men folks, often thinks aloud. I remember the little old country church——"

"Hush, Tilter. What! you are wandering among the clergy again?"

"Begs your pardon, my leddy; I was agoing to tell y' before, so I must tell y' this. There was a quaint little old church with a square kind of tower, as if some giant wicked 'un like had sat on it, and tried to quash it out. A countryfied little old church it was, with many old gravestones a'most as big as itself around it, many on 'em as old as the hills. A' one side o' the tower some ivy grew, and in it there was the place for the earliest blackbirds' nests, while in the tower the jackdaws was always a clattering, and I'm blessed if ever I know'd it without a white owl. His honour, my old master, used often to go a one side of the tower, and make me hammer at the door, to turn out the jackdaws from the belfry, for him to shoot and chuck down to the litters of foxes. I mind it well and the old farm house close by, and the barn, where we had such a to-do a-looking for a murderer.

"Well, my leddy, farm and church, church and farm, all was pretty much the same as one; and the old clerk,

Tim Cuffemtite, seemed part and parcel on 'em both, and as old as either. He was a cow-doctor and blacksmith, schoolmaster and what not; and having no good leddies like yourself, my leddy, to help him, he, somehow or other, taught the few boys there were to sing or make a nise in church, and never was there a father as could swear to his boys as well as he, for he sung through his nose, and so did every man jack of they. One dark sleepy kind of day, good master Cuffemtite had left his goggles at home, and for the life of him he could not give out the psalm. There sat his choristers all a-gape, like young jays a-waiting for a mouthful of pheasant's egg. So arter a-boring at it, he *thinks aloud* and says to himself as he intended, but quite out and right through his nose, in the usual key, the psalm-tune in course in his head.

'My eyes are dim, I cannot see,
I cannot make it out.'

"No sooner had he uttered this, than away went his scholards, through their little noses too, a singing the very words he guv 'em, as if they were gospel.

"Blessed if Cuffemtite warnt beside himself, and quite in a rage, he joined in where they ended what they'd got, with,—

'What are you at, you stupid fools,
What are you all about?'

When jist as they was beginning to foller him

again, the club-footed man with the only instrument they had to sing to, a violinchello as they called it, dashed into the rescue with a frightful grunt and flourish, and smothered 'em all to smithereens. Well, it warnt over yet; when the passon was a-going to ascend to the higher level, as we call it a-draining out o' doors now-a-days, old Cuffemtite catches him by the sleeve and says he, 'You *carnt* go up there, sir, her time an't up till to-morrow.'

"'*Her* time,' says his reverence, in some great like surprise; 'whose time?—what d'ye mean?'

"The turkey, sir, Farmer's famous old hen turkey. She sits up there, sir, on fifteen eggs, and as I says her time's not up till to-morrow, so you *carnt* go up a disturbing on her, whatsumdever, nohow. Go on where y' be.'"

"Oh, Tilter," said Lady Grace, "you have some very funny stories. But I must go now, and do not forget that for some time to come I may be so much occupied as not to be able to feed my pets, at the usual hours; therefore, you are to give them their food whether I am present or not." Thus saying, the Lady Grace took the direction of the Hall.

Some little time after the conversation between Lady Grace and the old servant, which we have related in the previous chapter, the close of the autumn came, but the weather still was gloriously fine, the golden tints were falling from the boughs, and the trees

seemed baring their stalwart arms in preparation for combat with the cold assaults of iron-bound winter.

Frosty to some extent though the nights and daily airs might be, yet the sun still had power enough, like the soft hand of charity on the chilliness of misfortune, to temper the winds to all living things, and to bring forth a rejoicing people to share in some passing pageant. The air resounded with church bells far and near; from some of the steeples waved banners decorated on the summit of the staff with the oak bough; booths were arranged on all the village greens, with cakes and tea for the children; wreaths of evergreens spanned every road and street where there was a facility for their erection; and on the fronts of the houses blazed in all the colours of the rainbow, intermixed with such sprigs of oak as still retained their leaves, the words, "Welcome to the choice of the electors," for a contest for the county had just been won.

There was a long straggling village there, slightly scattered on either side the high road, in the old-fashioned way, every house with its garden, and all kept neat and clean as if by one superintending hand. The cottages were humble, pretty, unobtrusive, and well cared for, not the stuck-out boasted things of the year 1869, denominated the "improved dwellings of the poor," but such domiciles as the old-fashioned *contented* labourer *delighted* to dwell in. The village

along the high road led up to a gothic lodge and splendid iron gates, the entrance to the park, in which stood an ample and an ancient Hall, surrounded by primeval oak trees that had never yet been touched by the needy and devastating hand of the spendthrift, and beneath them grazed, or fed on the fallen acorns, herds of stately deer. Above the gates were framed in large gilded letters, "Welcome to those we love," and on the green outside the gates stood a mass of joyous people, men, women, and children, all gazing anxiously down the road for some approaching object, undefined as yet to the eye, but still sending forth a herald of its near approach in a loud buzzing murmur mingled with the tramp of men and occasionally enlivened by short, spontaneous cheers as if beyond the possibility of suppression. A turn in the road at length showed many gaily-coloured banners waved in the wind by bearers as they exultingly advanced, and then the enlivening crash of an ample band broke forth in inspiring and triumphant strains, and at the head of the band, doing duty as drum major, stalked the tall, muscular figure of old Tilter, upright as a dart, and stepping not as if he "only trod on flowers," but in action as high as if he lifted his legs over the tallest turnips ever known; while on his breast, worked in green and gold by some fair hand, was a family knot, its counterpart only to be seen on graven stone on the outside of the ancient Abbey of St. Augustines, the Cathedral at Bristol.

As the band came fully in view, the tossing manes of two horses could be seen, and the riders side by side. They were of either sex, alike remarkable in look and bearing. Nearer and nearer yet to the gates of the lodge they came, and then the assembled multitude, as if with one mighty voice, exclaimed, "Welcome to the Lady Grace and the Master of Beverstone." The very leaves yet left on the gigantic oaks and elms came shivering down, with the cheer that seemed to rend the air asunder. Side by side then, thus they approached *her* father's Hall, the welcomed,—the observed of all observers. Pausing at the entrance gate, the Master of Beverstone thanked the surrounding multitude for their reception of him, and then laying his hand on the arching crest of the beautiful steed that bore the Lady Grace, he continued in a loud and concentrated voice full of deep feeling: "And here then, to your graceful lady, though I speak of her last she is not the least in your love or mine, in my affection or in yours; let me tender a heart's devotion, for ever in a future life dedicated to her service I could never repay the happiness she has extended to me, nor the kind interest she has taken in my fortunes. My castle is in ruins, as you all know, free to the winds of the Cotswold Hills; my fortune for a time is reft; but as long as I hold a high place in the estimation of the Lady Grace, as long as I possess a casket which to me is wealth of more value than all the gold in the uni-

verse, ruin may unhappily revel around my halls and acres, but neither time nor decay, misfortune nor the deeds of man, can touch my heart, nor shake that gratitude and love which succumbs alone to death."

Those beautiful eyes at his side, that while he spoke were bent upon her horse's mane, now lifted; they might have held a sweetly bright gem of the heart's best dew; but in that one glance, directed to her companion's face, there was almost a smile,—not quite, it was an approving look, but of a moment's duration, yet so fraught with the bliss of the inner life, the intense, the joyful fulness of the soul, that at a glance too he therein read no alteration in her devotion, no change with the change of circumstance, but that in their inner as well as in their outer life they were inseparable for ever. Thus then they entered her father's Hall amidst the welcome of tenantry and friends.

IDENTITY.

IDENTITY.

THERE was a first class farmer, or little gentleman, living at Cloongoon in the west of Ireland, a most excellent and respectable man in every sense of the word. So much so that the resident gentry in the neighbourhood shook him by the hand, and took his opinion on all agricultural matters. As between landlord and tenant, or between the employer and the employed, old Edward Courtenay's mediation was sure to satisfy both parties, and there was not a person in the whole country round, rich or poor, that did not look up to him with respect.

He had two sons, Tom Courtenay the hero of this tale, and a younger one. Tom when quite a "gossoon," was sent pattering along the road on his bare feet to a neighbouring school, for his father had not yet come to that state of refinement that thinks it necessary to shoe the feet, as well as clothe the back and line the head. This school, such as it was, did its duty, and perhaps the cool and well mudded state of the gossoon's under-

standings, transferred as cool a collection to his brain, for he never put himself out of the way for anything, never quarrelled with his fellow scholars, nor made faces behind the back of his master, but took in his lessons well, so well, indeed, that he not only went faster up the tree of knowledge than other boys, but even shot ahead of his teacher, and could have taught the teacher a good deal more than the teacher ever knew. Ere three years of study had been completed, he was "fit to blind the masther in classics, to say nothing of dazzling him in writing and arythmetic." He would argue with his master for hours, to the great edification of the lesser boys, and neglect of their lessons, and "*discoorse*" his quondam teacher dumb.

"McSweeney," such was the schoolmaster's name, was proud of the proficiency of his leading boy, and never could find it in his heart to check him, but used to sit regarding him with a puzzled expression in his honest features, that was highly amusing to certain sized scholars, while the rest, the lesser ones, sat with their mouths open and their "*universels*," on their knees, whispering and nudging each other in delight to see "old Sweens," so "tackled."

McSweeney, himself, used to sit scratching his head with the left hand, and holding in his right his book, which with an activity that was marvellous during Tom's quotations, he would leave off scratching, and slipping his thumb across his mouth to wet it, turn

over the leaves like lightning, and come to some place that had nothing to do with the quotations or translations in question.

"Why, thin, you young jackanapes, you—there isn't a line of what you're babbling about from cover to cover." This was true in one sense, for the well worn book had no covers. "There isn't a line in all the book that I had not at my fingers' ends before you were born."

"'Titchtyre toputulæ recoobans,' och bother, 'oh formose puer nimiuum ne crede colori'—bah or bother, which you plase, can you thranslate *that*, Misther clever?"

"You're out there, Mr. Mac, at all events, for I never had a bit."

"Well you're just as consated as if you had. Stan' up there, 'three syllables,' will you, I can't stay a talking to this young jackanapes all day; by the powers! we shall have him at the Assizes next, taching the judge to hang a murtherer."

About this time, or not very long after it, Tom became a fine handsome lad of sixteen years of age, and with a precocious feeling, oftentimes inherent in that spring time of lusty life, he fell in love, or what in ould Ireland love is often called, he "took a notion" to a very beautiful girl about his own age, "Catherine Murphy," the daughter of a widow Murphy who, in very comfortable circumstances, lived with her only daughter and one son, at Cortheen.

If this Emerald Isle expression be applicable to the boys of that inestimable habitat, it is similarly so to the girls; and early as it was for Tom Courtenay to be in that fair field of delusion, notion taking, there had been another Tom before him whose christian name was Maurice, and Catherine refused to listen to Courtenay's tale of love, but without telling him *why* she did so, or refusing to be in his company; when, as Tom saw no other smart young man with his hat cocked jauntily on one side, and a trifle of a stick under his arm, he still went on courting her society, at least, and under the impression that no very well-built fortress falls on a first assault.

Tom continued to go to McSweeney's school for another year, at the end of which he had worn threadbare the head of his master, and had forgotten more than it had ever contained. McSweeney was not sorry to be rid of him then, for to use the good-humoured pedagogue's own words, he was "quite all out and entirely beyant his ingenuity or comprehension to resolve;" so he called one fine morning on old Courtenay, and told him so in the following words:

"The top of the morning to you, Misther Courtenay, I've made a man of yer boy, but you'll have to send Masther Tom to some other school, for I can't get no more good out of him nor into him now. In place of larning his lessons and houldin' the tongue of him, as a

clever boy ought, and taking the larning from them's that's capable of taching, he's afther interrupting *me*, and startin' *me* questions, meandering about books he wasn't within a year and a half of."

It soon got abroad that young Tom Courtenay was a very clever boy, and that he made no more of the Greek and Latin authors, so the boys said, than "Johnny Rooney would of a 'read-a-ma-daisy.'" Two of the Romish priests hearing of this, sought out Tom and examined him; in fact they did their utmost to puzzle him, which sooth to say was not much, and they left him loud in their praises of his learning.

These two priests at once marked Tom Courtenay for their own. His looks, his address, were good, which is seldom the case with the Romish clergy, particularly when Jesuits, and besides this, his father had plenty of money, and of the world's goods, and Tom was his heir.

These two jolly old Jesuit boys were not long in sneaking up to Tom Courtenay's father and mother. They went at the mother first, and then it got rumoured about that the young, handsome, manly Tom Courtenay was destined for the Romish ministry. Well, when a mother joins *two* priests in getting round the father of a young man, their united efforts, night and day, as water on a rock, will eat into any man's head, and though old Ned Courtenay did not in the least like it, he sent young Tom to study for the priest-

hood to the college at Maynooth. He was there for nearly three years, coming home from time to time to see his parents.

Before the end of the third year, however, Tom Courtenay unexpectedly walked into his father's house, with nothing whatever of a clerical cut about him. He looked every man he met in the face, trod the earth with a firm resounding step, as if he did not wish to steal into anybody's presence, and was as little like a limb of the Jesuit priesthood as it was possible to be! On arriving before his astonished parents, he at once declared that "nothing in the whole world should induce him to be a priest, or return to Maynooth, he had had enough of it for——" Here he stopped short, and then would answer no questions nor give any further reasons "for the line of conduct he had adopted." Whatever his mother felt on the subject, there can be no sort of doubt but that old Ned Courtenay was delighted with his son's return, and gloried over him as of the return of a "prodigal son." A son, not prodigal of wealth, but prodigal of the blessings of this world, unwilling to cast away the light and life of Heaven—bestowed days, for a form of religion which *not* includes "charity to all men," but which is "cruel out of piety," self-seeking, and insolently assuming as to powers which can alone be invested in the Almighty.

As there was no immediate way of accounting for the return of Tom Courtenay, and for his refusal to be a

priest, rumour of course set it down to his conversion to the Protestant church, but then since his return he had never attended at that holy edifice, though that might arise, so said the gossips, because it was a too decisive step to take at present under the very shadow of his former chapel.

Tom had grown to be a tall man, his glossy dark hair grew in thick profusion back from and around his brow, showing a broad, high, manly forehead above a very intelligent face, and rather a long full neck, a Byron shaped neck and chin, the skin of the neck as fair as any girl's. In addition to very handsome features, he had a remarkably well-formed mouth, and such a kind, amiable expression in his smile, that he reminded you of the old ballad of the "Wild Irish Boy," and of the line in it, "The whitest of pearl did but mimic his teeth."

His cheeks, however, were unusually pale, unless lit up by some excitement of mental debate or bodily exertion, then the cheeks would blush with a roseate hue, which for a moment the observer thought became him most, but when that bloom had subsided, the observer liked the pallid hue best. Such was the appearance of this rather remarkable young man, about the period when he was approaching the most extraordinary incident of his life. In passing, I must allude to an occurrence that proved his character for manliness and humanity.

One day he met little Barney McDermott pattering along the wet road with his naked feet, crying and rubbing the dirt from his hands well into the corners of his eyes, apparently in great distress.

"What's the matter with you, Barney, my boy?" asked Tom Courtenay.

"I went, sir," the youngsters all called him "sir," ever since they heard he was to be a priest, "I went *iv'* a message, ahoo-ahoon, wid a bit of a bundle for Mr. McSweeney below de chapel of Curhowla, to Mr. Kelly the praiser, and when I gev it him, he gev me, ahoon-ahoon, a fippenny bit, and a piece of white bread. And tould me to go and tell Mr. McSweeney 'twas all right."

"Well, Barney, go on."

"Well, sir, him big McGuire, that's bully McGuire as they call him."

"I know him," said Tom.

"He seen me gitting the fippennybit, an' he follered me on the road a piece, until he got me out of retch of the house, when he took hoult of me by the throat and bid me give it up at wanst. I wouldn't, so he thruw me down an' bet me and kicked me, and tuck it ov me in the spite of all I could do. 'Twas my fippennybit not his'n, and he had my bit bread too, sir, an I'm all sore and kilt where he murthered me."

"Never mind him," said Tom, taking him to the ditch by the roadside, where there was a little run of

water, where having washed his hands and face, and dried them with his handkerchief, and scraped with his knife his corduroys, he sent him off home, assuring him he should have tippence at another time.

On the following Sunday Tom Courtenay walked up in front of the chapel of Curhowla, just after the congregation came out from prayers. It was puzzling to those who formed it, to think what brought Tom Courtenay there of all people, for added to the reports that he had left the Romish church, Curhowla was not his parish, but three miles away from it; besides he was not in time for prayers, and in addition to this it was remarked that he was not "dressed in a Sunday's best," but had on his everyday clothes, such as he wore at cricket or out shooting. At all events there Tom Courtenay was, speaking civilly to such as spoke to him, but looking about him as if in search of some one he desired to meet.

"Did you plase to want anyone, sir?" said a rosy, round-faced chap about twelve years old, with a true Hibernian countenance, who, instead of going to prayers, had been playing at "high spy I," with a few other boys, round the corners of the chapel, to the considerable annoyance of the priest.

"I *do*," replied Tom; "I want to see a fellow they call Bully McGuire; is he anywhere about here?"

"Oh, then, indeed an' he is, you'll find him behint the chapel where, all prayer time to now, he's been

playing at pitch and toss wid Andy Regan and four or five ithers. Will I tell him you want him, sir?"

"No, never mind," said Tom, passing on, when, just as he turned the corner of the chapel, he saw McGuire under a large sycamore tree, and heard him vociferating *a strong* denial of having picked up a "harp," instead of a "head," which one of his "tossmates" as strongly, and with as great an oath, charged him with having done.

As Tom came forward, Andy Regan saw him and wished to make him a referee in the dispute, beginning at the same time to explain the case.

"Bother," bounced McGuire, "I want no referee, I'll leave the decision to no man alive, and I'll throunce any one that dares to put in a word," at the same time turning a look of defiance on Tom Courtenay.

"I'll have nothing to say to *this* dispute," said Tom, "but I have a little business to settle with you, McGuire, upon another account."

"Well, and what have you to say to me, Misther Courtenay? Nothing but what I'm able to answer if you was twice the man you are, Misther Courtenay; book larning's not always the strongest, and you'll find it won't go down with me."

"We'll see that," replied Tom. "Do you know little Barney McDermott, a boy from my neighbourhood, whom you saw at Mat Kelly's on Wednesday last?"

"Well, Misther Courtenay, and what if I do?"

"Just this, you beat and kicked him in a very brutal manner, and more, you *robbed* him of a five-penny piece. If you don't hand *that* bit of money out this instant, I'll see if I can't make you."

Now this was a gallant speech for a young man to make in a strange place, to one a stone and a half heavier than he was, and it elicited nothing more than a contemptuous "horse-laugh" from the big fellow whom he threatened. Tom, however, stepped up and seized McGuire by the collar, while all the bystanders formed a ring round them, not one of them so intensely delighted as Andy Regan.

"Come, hand it out at once," said Tom, "I mean to have it!"

"Not to you, you turncoat," shouted McGuire, suddenly closing and seizing him round the waist, and endeavouring to give him the fall.

Tom was too quick for him, for, as he closed, he hit him left and right, breaking away from him at the same time, while blood ran copiously from McGuire's nose and mouth. McGuire, thinking his best chance was at close quarters, again ran in, but was again punished and eventually thrown, when Tom Courtenay stood over him and told him he would drag poor little Barney's fippenny bit out of him, if he "didn't give it up."

"I'll give it up if you'll let me out of this," said McGuire, and Tom stood from off him.

All this time the bystanders looked on in great delight to see "Bully McGuire" getting what they all wished to give him, but which none of them had the courage to attempt.

"There's yer rascally fippenny bit," said the bully, handing out the coin, "but blood and oons, I'll be revenged at another time."

Tom Courtenay took no notice of what he said, but quietly walked off to make poor little Barney McDermott happy by the restoration of his money, adding, at the same time, from his own pocket, a similar coin.

There could be no doubt but that, up to this time, Courtenay had set his heart on marrying Catherine Murphy. She never had given him a decided refusal, nor had she ever hinted at who his more successful rival was. Her mother *had* hinted to him that her affections *were* engaged, but the successful candidate for her hand was a myth; no one was ever seen to pay her much attention, so Tom Courtenay, having come to a time of life to know what his own pretensions were, resolved to seek an early opportunity of clearing up the matter.

Things had remained in this state for some time, when, on a clear frosty day in the early part of November, when the ground was strewn with the bright, warm, tinted leaves that had fallen from the beech trees, and the oaks looked as if they blushed over their dropped acorns, Tom Courtenay met Catherine Mur-

phy as she took a walk, and, joining her, at once resolved to come to a more distinct understanding.

They walked for some time in silence. Tom was silent because, in spite of himself, he had a misgiving that his suit was hopeless, while Catherine felt embarrassed because she did not know what he would ask, nor, if he put straightforward questions, was she in a position to say who it was that really and without doubt stood between Tom Courtenay and herself. The fact was, Catherine and her mother, more of her mother than herself, had a well-to-do young man *in view*; he had, as the old lady thought, given room for the idea that he *might* make up to Catherine, when, as he was richer than Tom, the mother had an idea that by keeping two strings to their bow, at any moment there was a good match to be made for asking; the one better than the other.

They continued their walk for some distance, when, on coming to a fallen beech, that had been uprooted by the wind, they sat down side by side. Tom seized on the opportunity, and, taking Catherine's hand, he said,—

"Now tell me, Kattie, you have seen for a long time how much I loved you, and that rather than become a priest I have disobeyed the wishes of a dear and affectionate father and mother. Time, distance, and study, made no difference in the firmness of my love for you; am I then not now in a position to ask

you to tell me if the love I bear you *is*, or is *not*, reciprocated?"

Catherine looked on the ground for some short space, and then replied. "Tom, I cannot answer you; I do not mean to say that I have any repugnance to you, far from it, yet still at this time I can give no further explanation, you must ask my mother."

"Repugnance!" said Courtenay, his pale cheek flushing up as the evening sunbeam on the driven snow; "repugnance, *that* word I *hate*, and I must ask you to tell me more. Who, then, is it, that is higher than I am in your estimation? I pledge my word that whoever it is I will say nothing against him, for I scorn to disparage an absent rival."

"I cannot tell you *who* it is, *perhaps* it is no one."

"What then, Kattie, is there *any doubt* as to whether there is any one or *not*. Then you trifle with me! Mine is not the love of a few hours, it has ripened in the passage of years, and the ripe fruit must be plucked or it must fall. I have sought this interview, Kattie; it is the best of any we have ever had, *or* it *is the last;* do you love me, Kattie, or, putting that method of speech aside, is there *any man* you love better?"

"No," she replied, after a little hesitation, "I love no one *better*, but then—my mother——"

"Your mother, I thought so, *she* then has been the bitter obstacle to my happiness, and yet she has kept

me on and off, telling me to wait and see what my chance would be. Kattie, I cannot brook this state of things any longer. If you love me, will you fly with me at once, and be mine in the light of day? Tell me you will, dearest Kattie," and as he said this his arm encircled her waist, and drew her nearer to him on the fallen tree.

But though his strong arm attempted to give her handsome form a closer inclination to his side, though his eager lip came towards her face, she held aloof, and, coolly rising, said "it was time to go home." Courtenay's high mind and quick insight into human desires, asked for nothing more: he *felt* that he *was answered*,—he felt, or thought, that she seemed to care no more for him than the dead tree she had sat on, and at the same instant he remembered how long and how well he had loved her, and how thoroughly all that long time she had known the full extent of his desires. She *might* then, *perhaps*, have been his but for a designing mother; yet separating the mother from the daughter, even now there was a hesitation about Catherine he could not quite understand; the one, to his heated mind, seemed as much to blame as the other, and feeling that not only had he been trifled with, but also deceived as to Catherine's real state of affection for him, he uttered one hasty exclamation, "May God forgive you, but as to your mother she'll curse the day it happened!" and hastened away, leav-

ing Catherine Murphy time and distance in which to contemplate the selection she had made, or been induced to make by her designing mother.

The term "gentleman," which, according to some accounts, means a man who has *no trade*, or, in other words, has no visible or honest means of earning a livelihood, is an appellation of great worth, and though the one quoted may be *a* way of solving the question of gentility, or it might have been in the days of the duel, yet it does not really define the intrinsic worth of the word or touch its real peculiarity. Any outer semblance of a man, however ill-dressed, rough-mannered, and poor, may contain the precious metal, the courage, the chivalry, the modest self-respect, that proclaims one man a hero, while his fellow-creature in outward form, is but a beast. And two men in a similar position, in a worldly point of view, may represent the Valentine and Orson of society: I say this because the hero I am dealing with was not, in position, one of the "upper ten," though for a long, long time every soul who knew him had respected and loved him, and every lord, baron, knight, or esquire, whenever they met him in the hunting-field, on the race-course, or at a coursing meeting, shook hands with him and told Tom Courtenay that "they were glad to see him."

A young man, such as Tom Courtenay, was not likely to be held in a sort of on-and-off durance by a

coquette or an intriguing mother, for he was possessed of just that amount of self-love which any young man ought to have. He knew his worth and the position which, without undue assumption, he was well calculated to fill, and he had resolution enough to assert his place, whatever pain that assertion might give him. He knew that it was not always gold that glittered, nor that it was the brightest coin to the eye that was the most valuable. Paste, for a time, will shine with the lustre of diamonds, and he had sense enough to be aware that, however charming might be the form and feature of a girl, unless she had that within which was the real worth of the mine, however gaudy might be the wild flowers on its surface, love's genial labour would be lost if thrown on a heart so unsusceptible of real affection. Everybody liked Tom Courtenay, and thoroughly believed in his worth, and no one deemed that misplaced affection could change him. We know not the worth of iron, nor the amount of dross, till it has been through the furnace and "seven times heated," and no one knew of what Tom Courtenay was really capable or incapable, until he was thrown into an ordeal, the purport and force of which scared the neighbourhood from its propriety, and went far to induce every soul to regard a hitherto approved neighbour with distrust.

On the 15th of November, word was brought to "Ballytoger Police-station" that the house of the

respectable Widow Murphy had been attacked on the previous night, and entered by a party, two of whom were armed with pistols, and a considerable sum of money taken away. This was the night after Courtenay's parting with Catherine, as described. In addition to this, the robbers severely beat the widow, endangering her life, and one of them even struck her young and handsome daughter. The widow herself had been indeed beaten to death's door. This intelligence was reported so quickly after the robbery and assault to the chief of the police, that the constables were on the spot before the report of the outrage had time to spread any considerable distance.

It was, then, in that bracing hour of a fresh November morning, when fires from daybreak to bed-time, in all houses well done by, are agreeable, and wherein the inhabitants have it in their power to live comfortably, that the chief of the police entered the elder Courtenay's house at Cloongoon. On entering the house the chief found the family at their comfortable breakfast, the good-looking, handsome son, Tom Courtenay, the picture of open, honest manliness, in the act of laughing, while at intervals he drank his tea, looking the very picture of happiness and ease. His father and mother, and a younger brother at breakfast with him, and joining in the hilarity so common to the supposed good nature of the elder brother.

They all rose to receive the chief of the constabulary,

each of them crying, "Welcome, welcome, your honour; come and have some breakfast with us. You're about early to day," and George handed him a chair.

"No, thank you, Mr. Courtenay," the chief replied, apparently under some constraint; "I'm sorry to say I have called on serious business."

"On business, your honour?" said the father. "Why, then, is there anything the matter hereabouts, or anything that Tom and I can do for you?"

"Tom Courtenay, where were you last night? That," replied the chief constable, "is my *first* question."

"At home, your honour, and with us; we can swear he was," asserted both father and mother, showing at the same time some little astonishment.

"He slept in the same bed with me," said his younger brother, little Billy; "so there's no doubt he *was* at home."

The chief of police made no reply, but opening the door, called in two constables, and then said, "Tom Courtenay, you are my prisoner, on the charge of breaking and entering and robbing the Widow Murphy's house, and severely beating the old lady, and striking her daughter, by so doing endangering the life of Mrs. Murphy. It is my duty to tell you that you had better be silent, and reserve all you have to say till you are brought before the magistrates."

"Silent! silent!" Tom Courtenay cried, dashing the chair upon which he had been sitting to the ground.

"Silent! I care not who hears what I have to say. I defy the world; there's no person so black as to lie to injure me. Even if I had not my father, mother, and brother, to clear me from being from home last night, I have enough within my own heart to bear me through. That I have *beaten* Mrs. Murphy and struck her daughter, she—Catherine—she *must know* whether I did do so, or was likely to do so or not, for those dear eyes of hers could penetrate any disguise I might have put on. Come, sir, lead the way; I'll be ready in two minutes."

"Stop! we must not lose sight of you, Tom Courtenay, as the charge necessitates precaution;" so saying, the chief accompanied Tom to his room, wherein he only wished to go for his great coat.

While one of the constables kept by the side of the prisoner in the parlour, the chief and the other constable searched the house for pistols, and also for Courtenay's other clothes. No pistols were found, and his more common or every-day clothes, or such clothes as he would have gone out in at night, had neither mud nor blood, nor wet upon them, nor did they bear any appearance of having been lately washed and dried, and there was nothing of any kind that afforded local evidence of the crime with which he stood charged, about his room, nor in any part of the building, stable or shed.

It would be vain to attempt to describe the grief and

agony of poor Mrs. Courtenay when she saw her handsome son, so good-looking, hitherto supposed to be so steady, and so great a favourite as he was also with all the gentry and neighbours of every degree around, marched off between two policemen, like a culprit guilty of the most heinous crime. "But thin, by the howly Virgin," exclaimed a bystander, "it's them still whaters what's the dapest. I nair judges ony man by his looks, for none can say what's benath 'em."

On the way from his father's house Tom Courtenay made light of the whole affair; of course, the police entered into no explanation of the matter, and Tom went on saying that when he came face to face with his accusers the mistake would be found out, and he often reverted to Catherine Murphy. "Poor dear, dear Catherine Murphy, she'll know whether I was in the house or not when it was robbed; if she had not been beaten by the villains she'd have laughed outright at the idea of its being me." Old Courtenay accompanied his son, and the last words Tom said to his distracted mother, who had thrown herself on a stone bench at the once happy house-door, when she saw the police take her "handsome boy" away, were, "Cheer up, mother; father's going with me, and we'll soon be back."

On the arrival of the party at the police barrack, the doctor that had been attending on the Widow Murphy, who had been much more severely beaten than her

daughter Catherine, reported to the chief that "his patient was in imminent danger of her life, for he feared that her skull was fractured, though within the last hour she had rallied and regained her senses enough to recognise her daughter."

While these things were taking place, Catherine Murphy, who, though she had received a severe blow or two, was in no danger, was sent, with the maid-servant, Winifred Cox, who had been a witness to the attack, on to the chief police-station, while a constable had been despatched to ask for the attendance there of the nearest magistrate.

When the chief of the police reached his head-quarters, he found that the magistrate had arrived before him, and taken the depositions of Catherine Murphy and the servant, Winifred Cox, *who both swore positively to the fact* of Tom Courtenay's being the leader in the outrage, and that he was the young man who so cruelly beat the widow. They said, "They had no doubt whatever that it was Tom Courtenay, and that Catherine had called him by name at the time, but that during the entire robbery and assault he never spoke a word, fearing, perhaps, to be detected by his voice."

On the third day after Tom Courtenay's committal, the doctor in attendance on the widow rode down to the head-quarters of the chief of the police with the intelligence that the widow could not long survive,

certainly not more than a day or two, if so many hours. On this, the magistrate was sent for, and they repaired to the dying widow's bedside to take the deposition from her last breath. The magistrate having implored her to tell the truth under the awful circumstances in which she was, she in reply lifted up her hands in silent prayer, which no one seemed inclined to interrupt. She at length said,—

"I know that I am going to die; it is not of *him* that I am thinking, although *he has* made my poor James an orphan, and my girl without a mother. I forgive him; let me die with the comfort of forgiveness at my heart. *He* must have been mad, for he was *not* drunk; but I'll not swear against him. I'm on my death-bed, and I'll not take an oath at all. Oh, *Tom, Tom Courtenay,* I forgive you, as I hope the Lord will. Why should I swear? Isn't there my darlint Kattie herself, and Winny Cox? Didn't they both see him and know him better than I did, and tax him at the time to his face as to what he was doing of? an' sure he never spake a word in gainsay, for he couldn't deny it. Oh, Tom, Tom, *Thomas Courtenay,* 'twas surely you and your party what murthered me. Tom Tom! avic macree, wouldn't I give her to you and welcome before any boy in the parish, *if she was for you,' but she wasn't,* just then; and didn't I often tell you, asthore, to wait, and maybe she'd come round? Oh, Tom, Tom Courtenay, isn't it to

yourself I'd send? And to think that you came and murthered me!"

Here the widow became exhausted, and fell back on her pillow.

During the time she was speaking both the magistrate and the chief constable noted down every word she said; and the justice having put it into proper form, read it over to her, and asked her "if it all was true?"

She sat up in bed directly, with more strength than was expected, and laying her hand upon the paper, she exclaimed, "I declare, as I am a dying woman, that that is nothing but the truth! Oh, Tom, Tom," she continued, "if my poor James, my boy, had been at home that night you wouldn't have dared to have come next to near us; and wasn't it your own self that *sent him away to the fair on purpose, as he tells me?* Oh Tom, Tom, you did it for *jealousy and gain.*"

The widow again relapsed into unconsciousness, and the magistrate and his attendants left the house, leaving the priest, who just then arrived, to administer the last consolations of religion. The widow died some time during the night.

As the magistrate and the chief constable were proceeding in the direction of their respective homes, the justice, after a long silence, remarked "that of all men to commit such a crime as the one under investigation, he should have thought that the most unlikely man to

do so was Tom Courtenay. But," he continued, shaking his head, "there seems in this to have been a motive irrespective of money. Jealousy, one of the strongest passions of all, *may* have been at the bottom of it; he seems to have loved the girl, and she, with some complicity with her mother, refused him."

"It seems as if it was so," replied the chief constable; "but, like you, sir, I should have looked on Tom Courtenay as incapable of so horrible a deed."

On the morning of the 21st of November, Constable Hanly arrived with a request for an immediate interview with his chief. Now, Hanly was an indefatigable officer, and one on whose activity and ability his chief could rely.

"Well, Hanly," exclaimed the chief, "what have you to report to me?"

"We're all right, sir," replied the man, with professional brevity. "The very night the widow Murphy's house was attacked, that same party called at Phil Moran's public-house at the cross roads, at Shroneen, and demanded whiskey. Now Phil Moran is an uncle of Tom Courtenay's, and recognized and spoke to him, and this after Courtenay had smashed in the door upon his refusal to open his house and give them whiskey; this, sir, I think, *clenches the matter.*"

"It's very conclusive evidence, if we required it, Hanly; but there's enough without it."

"Required it, yer honour! Saving yer honour's pre-

sence I think, 'tis better than all the rest put together, —*his own uncle.*"

"True, Hanly, the business was conclusive enough before; but this, as you say, clenches it. How did you get wind of it? Did you see Moran himself?"

"No, sir, and that's what I think the better of it for. Phil Moran told about Tom Courtenay's smashing in his door for whiskey at midnight, as a good joke against the young Simon Pure, in whose mouth butter wouldn't melt, so folks believed; but when he heard next morning of the robbing and probable murder of the widow, and *who* was apprehended for it, he cut,— that is, he left home the morning after the widow died, and has not since been heard of. He let out the first of it, before he knew what followed, and now no doubt old Courtenay's a keeping him out of the way, or he's a doing of it himself, because he won't peach on his own kith and kin. But, sir, if he's in Ireland I'll make him off and we'll have the whole story out."

Poor old Ned Courtenay, Tom's father, as has been said before, he was a most respectable farmer of the better class, beloved by everybody, and associated with by all the resident gentry. Nothing in the agricultural line was acknowledged to be good unless old Ned Courtenay's opinion had pronounced it to be so. Young Tom got mounts with the hounds, and invitations to shoot; he knew his place, and, however familiarly treated, he never assumed; and at the moment of

this terrible affair, the good substantial farm house of the Courtenays was a house of call to all ranks of society, from the highest to the lowest; but now, what a terrible misfortune shut them out of the pale of respectable society, and in a very few months changed the silvering hairs on the unhappy father's head, to the veriest whiteness of the snows of winter.

Matters remained thus for three months: all that time Tom Courtenay lay in prison expecting the day of his trial. The middle of February approached, and the hour for arraignment on the charge of murder drew very near. During this period the police had kept a sharp look out for the prisoner's uncle, "Misther Moran." Moran was what might be aptly termed a comfortable man, or a man in easy circumstances, for what between a cheap or much underlet farm, and a decent public-house, at good cross-roads, he contrived to obtain a very fair living. Before this unfortunate business respecting his nephew, and his own admission of what his nephew had done on the uncle's premises on the same night, but previous to the murder, Moran was never known to be absent from his business and his home for three days together; now he had been missing for nearly three months. If the evidence he could give was not very strong against Tom Courtenay, he had better have remained where he was, than have been away; for his absenting himself gave rise to the worst possible suspicions. The Crown summonses had come, and

among them one for "Philip Moran," and they were lying in the office of the chief of the police, when Hanly the intelligent constable, who had been appointed to trace Moran to his hiding-place, came in to make his report.

"Well, Hanly," said the chief, "no chance, I suppose, of finding the witness you've been in quest of?"

"No *chance* in life, sir, but a dead certainty. I made him off at last."

"We're all right, then, now. What does he say for himself?"

"Say, your honour! Why, then, not a word, for I didn't see him; he's not in this part of the country, but I know where he is, and I'll serve him with the summons before Saturday night, as sure as his name is Phil Moran."

"Where is he, then, and how did you make him off?"

"Just this, sir: I left off daling with Mrs. McLoughlin of Clonterm, and took up to daling for tae, sugar, and candles, and such like at the post-office, sending my little boy Johnny there sometimes twice a day for such mathers, with tachings to purtend to be a stupid chap, which your honour knows he isn't, but to have his eyes and ears wide open. Well, sir, yesterday, while he was in the shop, tap there comes to the wooden pane in the window, and a girl hands in a letter with ninepence to pay the postage. '*Be sure*, mam,' says she, 'if you plaise, to send *that* letter by *this* night's post.'

"'We never delays letters in *this* office,' bounced out the post-misthress, snapping the girl's head well nigh off, and down she slaps the wooden pane again as if she wished to cut the bearer of the letter's head off, and then she chucks the letter on the counter while she served little Johnny with some tae and sugar. The boy skiewed his head and shoulders round a bit, and while the post-misthress thought he was looking at the sugar, as was natural that a boy should do, he reads off the address and there sees, 'To Mister *Philip Moraghan*, at Mrs. Carney's, Carrickfergus.' It's there where I get him, *Philip Moran;* t'other name's only a blind, and a mighty bad one too."

"Well, Hanly, you have done your duty, as you always do. There's the summons, and go in plain clothes to serve it."

On the 2nd of March Hanly returned, bringing Philip Moran with him; and when the latter was taken before the magistrates for his deposition, he refused to be sworn, maintaining, indeed, an unbroken silence.

The magistrates then explained to Moran the position in which he stood, and told him "that if the evidence he could give *was against* his nephew, still he had a duty to perform towards the public, and he must give it; if he did not do so they had but one course to pursue, and that was to commit him to gaol." To this he did make answer. "I do refuse, and God's will be done."

He was then fully committed to the county gaol, and he lay that night in the fourth cell from that in which his nephew was confined.

It was now the 7th of March, the judge, Sir William Smith, had arrived and opened the commission, given his charge to the grand jury, and retired to his lodgings. The town was in a bustle. Two sentries were pacing at what in those days might have been called duelling distances, up and down before the judge's door, the sheriff's carriage rolled along the street with a long white stick poking out of the window. Policemen with their respective packs or bundles kept dropping in in small parties from the distant stations, and lodging-houses and eating-houses were in great demand. As two of these police parties met from different stations at the head of the main street, Constable Collert, with his two companions, plumped up against Constable Ferris with one other of the force.

"Halloo, boys," said Ferris, "where do you put up? Let's all stop together. Kavanagh recommended us to stop at Frank Hinnigan's, as a quiet, dacent house, no resort for thieves; so come along."

"Ay," rejoined Collert, "but there's this agin it—it's a long way off from the court and the parades, and we're three to two agin you; so come with us to Jemmy McCoy's. Hinnigan's, though clane and dacent, is an out-of-the-way place."

"Toss up for choice, boys," said a young sub-constable, who had not yet spoken, "and we'll abide by the winner."

Out came a half-penny from Ferris's pocket. "I'll cry," says Collert; "'heads.'"

"You've lost," said Ferris, "it's 'legs.' By Jericho, I've won for the first time in the life of me; may *be there's luck in that Manx half-penny, more than we know of;* come, lads, follow me," and they all adjourned to Hinnigan's.

Now the reader may wonder why I so minutely describe such passages as these, but I do so to show how often, and very often unheeded, the inscrutable hand of a divine will appears in cases of life and death, the development of that will selecting in this case the smallest coin but one in the realm to work out the proofs of innocence or guilt. I entreat my readers then to bear this apparently trivial circumstance in mind, and I ask those who may have skipped it over as not worth perusal, to turn back and read it again, as it contains or leads to most important facts.

On the 8th of March, then, the business of the assizes began, and among the many anxious hearts that beat, or almost ceased to beat, with every footstep coming towards their cell, there was no heart more miserable, than that of the prisoner, Tom Courtenay, who at the moment of which I am writing was on his way from the gaol to the court-house, handcuffed and

among forty or fifty dirty, begrimed, and ill-looking prisoners, strictly guarded on their way by bristling bayonets. Whatever were his thoughts, however great might have been the shame of his present position, he carried his handsome head erect above his firm and manly step, and passed into the dock, his cheeks as pale as ever, but without a symptom of trepidation upon him. Some minor cases were taken first, and the trial of Courtenay was fixed for the first thing the following morning.

The anxious hour came. Tom Courtenay stood upright as a dart in the front of the dock, and never took his eyes off the clerk of the Crown while reading the indictment. The indictment having been read, the clerk concluded with the words, "How say you, are you guilty or not guilty?" Courtenay threw up his handsome eyes as if to send their glances through the roof to heaven, and shaking back the hair from his brow, replied in a voice which was not loud but which in its depth and distinctness reached every corner and every ear in court.

"*Not* guilty, so help me God in this my great extremity."

Then he leant forward against the rail of the dock, and seemed almost fainting away. A glass of water being handed to him, he instantly recovered his self-possession.

The usual preliminary followed of telling him that

when the names of the jury were called over, he might object to any one he pleased.

"I will object *to none*," he replied; "they all come here to do their duty before God, and none I'm sure will violate that sacred obligation."

During the passing of these few words, the judge fixed upon the accused a steady and scrutinizing glance, and even paused in his observation of the prisoner for a second or two. After he had done he asked "if there was a counsel for the defence."

Serjeant Boozlem, the famous counsel in defence cases, then stood up and said,—

"I appear for the prisoner, my lord, at the desire of his father."

The trial then commenced with an able statement from the Crown counsel, which, if supported in evidence, as we have already seen that it would be, and that too of the most damning kind, left but little doubt as to the result of the trial.

Catherine Murphy was the first witness called; she never looked at the prisoner, though as she entered the box he fixed his full bright eyes on her. She was well dressed in black and looked very handsome, and what was more, she looked as if she knew it herself. She manifested no feeling as to the situation of her former lover, or if she did, it was wonderfully well disguised. Her apparent want of feeling in that respect might have arisen on account of the murder of her

mother, but there she stood, at all events, under the most painful circumstances, a terrible witness in proof of damning guilt. Her statement was to the effect that on the night of the 14th of November she was at home. No one there but her mother, herself, and the servant, Winifred Cox. Her brother James was absent at the fair. Some time after midnight there was a loud knocking at the door; witness was frightened, but dressed herself as quickly as possible, but her mother told her not to speak. Winifred Cox got up also, when just as they got together the door was smashed in upon the floor, and two men entered. They lit a candle at the embers of the fire. She knew the man that blew the coal, recognized him perfectly when the light of the coal was flaring in his face, as well as after the candle was lit. Could not be mistaken, had known him since they were children together, and her heart jumped up when she saw it was the prisoner at the bar, Tom Courtenay."

At this point she hesitated and became confused.

Serjeant Boozlem made a cup of his hand, and stuck his hand behind his ear, peering into the face of the witness with half closed eyes, intended to convey to the jury considerable suspicion of the evidence.

The Crown counsel then told her "to take her time and tell the truth," and she recovered her composure. She then again became agitated as she said, "She thought Tom Courtenay had come to take her away,

but soon had reason to see her mistake. The men were armed with pistols, they went to my poor mother's bedside, one seizing her by the arm and making her sit up. On my oath, that was the prisoner, and at his door I lay my mother's death."

Here a murmur and sensation of horror rustled through the court, while a bitter smile broke over the prisoner's lips; the examination was resumed.

"Is positive the prisoner is the man. He asked where the money was, her mother declared she had none; the prisoner then struck her mother with the end of the pistol, and swore that if she did not tell him where the money was, he would give her more of it. Witness knew her mother had a small box with some money in it, but was not aware of where she kept it; had she been so she would have told to save her mother's life. She asked her mother for God's sake to tell where the money was, and let all bad luck go with it. Her mother looked at the prisoner and said 'never; *Tom,* you're the last man breathing I thought would do me an ill turn, and only for you struck me, I'd think it was joking you are, or through liquor, what I never saw on you yet.'"

"Well, never mind what your mother *said,* what did the prisoner *do*?"

"They, him and others, dragged my mother out of bed, and into the kitchen, and struck her again, but she would not tell. They then drew out the hot coals, the

rakings of the fire on the hearth, and threw her down upon them. The prisoner, Tom Courtenay, held her under the arms, and the other man pulled her legs from under her. I then roared 'Murder,' and seized the prisoner by the throat, and asked him if he was going to kill my mother for the sake of a few pounds, and she said to him, 'Tom Courtenay, I'll hang you as high as the castle for this night's work.' He, Tom Courtenay, then gave her a blow, which staggered her against the wall. My mother was screaming very loud. During this time Winnie Cox had collared the other man. Between my help and Winnie's my mother struggled up, and said, 'Give them the box, Kitty, 'tis in the little press at the head of the bed.' I then showed them the press, which they broke open, and took the box, money and all. The prisoner, Tom Courtenay, opened the box, and said, 'All right, we've had a harder job of it than I thought for, and the sooner we're off the better.' There was also a purse in the box with some silver in it, which I'd know again among a thousand, as good right I've got to do, for the prisoner himself had given it to me four years ago; a leather purse lined with silk, and letters upon it. I gave it into the care of my mother for safety. Did not know the second man, but would know him if I now saw him for twenty years to come. He had red hair, and a cut across one of his eyebrows. Saw a third man standing outside the house looking in, but

did not know *him*, nor would I know him again if I saw him. My mother died four days after, of the injuries she received. Had no more to say."

Serjeant Boozlem cross-examined Catherine Murphy at much length as to her former intimacy with the prisoner, but failed completely to shake her identity of Courtenay. He endeavoured to raise a belief that she now came forward in spite, to swear his life away because he would not marry her, but this inference produced a look of scorn, even from the prisoner, who said, to the regret no doubt of his counsel, and to the surprise of the court, "that he acquitted the girl of any such notion." In fact there were no materials on which to found a cross-examination on the evidence given by Catherine Murphy, nothing to cross-examine upon. The only remarkable point of the attempted cross-examination was that wherein Serjeant Boozlem said,—

"O—o—oh, mam, so the prisoner wanted you to marry him, and *you* refused—is that it, ma'am, eh?"

"I did refuse him."

"Do you *swear* that, ma'am?"

"I do, positively."

"Now, Miss Murphy, you'll find it very hard to make the jury believe *that* story."

"It's perfectly true, sir," exclaimed the prisoner.

"I protest, sir," said Serjeant Boozlem, in a rage, "if you interrupt in this manner, I'll throw up my brief, and

let you defend yourself. I never saw such an instance of the old pro——"

"Listen to me, prisoner," said the judge, interrupting. "You have a very able counsel to defend you, trust your case to him, and do not, I pray, interrupt him or the court again."

"I beg your pardon, my lord," replied Tom Courtenay, "and the pardon of the court if I have done wrong. I hope the court will permit me to say a few words before the close of this unhappy business." Then, for the first time, Tom Courtenay seemed completely mastered by his feelings, he laid his forehead on his arms on the rail of the dock, and sobbed aloud. For a few seconds there was a silent house, not a soul in the court but what seemed affected. The prisoner's looks, his demeanour, his gentlemanly bearing all through the trial as far as it had gone, had won the good or pitying opinion of everybody; the sympathy of the court was with him, and in another minute he recovered his firmness and stood erect again.

The judge then addressing him said, "You shall have ample opportunity afforded you to make any statement you think fit at the proper time, but at present you *must* permit the trial to proceed. Now, Brother Boozlem."

"I protest, my lord, I don't see that I have anything further to ask this witness. The only point which I thought did exist to shake her evidence, the prisoner has *set right himself.* She may go down."

Winifred Cox then corroborated every word of Catherine Murphy's evidence. She had known Tom Courtenay many years herself, and could not be mistaken.

Philip Moran, the uncle, was then brought into court, face to face with his nephew. If ever there was death-like silence apart from death itself, it was there and then, when the reluctant uncle on his oath was sworn to tell the fatal truth.

Moran never raised his eyes, never opened his lips, he never moved nor seemed to breathe. The clerk held forth the book and told him to take it, but the arms of the witness seemed dead by his side, and nothing could be got from him.

The prisoner, on the other hand, hid his face in his hands as his uncle went up to the witness-box, and again seemed much affected.

The counsel for the Crown rose and said,

"My lord, this is a most material witness for the Crown, and however painful the position in which he stands towards the prisoner, and in which we stand in bringing him forward, for I understand he is his uncle, the case is of such magnitude in itself, and so peculiar as regards the unfortunate man in the dock, that we feel it imperative upon us to establish guilt, if guilt there is, by the mouths of many witnesses. The prisoner, I understand, has hitherto borne a most excellent character, and such will be attested here I have no doubt,

this day, by many most respectable persons. This very fact, my lord, makes it the more incumbent on us to fortify our case by all the evidence we can fairly bring to bear upon it, in order to satisfy not only the jury but the public, beyond the shadow of a doubt, as to the guilt of the prisoner. We must press for the evidence of this witness, Philip Moran."

"You are entitled to it, brother Ramshackle, and I have no doubt he will give it you," replied the judge. "Witness, listen to me."

Moran neither moved nor even cast his eyes on the judge.

"Witness," continued the judge, "pray direct your eyes to me while I address a few words to you."

Had Moran been made of marble he could not have been more still. It was the stillness of death itself. The judge evidently thought he was in some sort of fit, for he seemed perplexed, and then asked in an undertone, "if the medical gentleman who had charge of the gaol was in court; if not, he was to be sent for."

In the meantime he again addressed Moran.

"Witness, I am quite sure you must hear what I say. Your present course cannot avail you; the law must be vindicated, and however painful it may be to you, you *must* give your evidence. If you persist in refusing to do so, I shall have no alternative but to commit you to prison for an indefinite term."

Still not a word, not a move. The prisoner then

started up from the leaning position with an averted face, that he had maintained ever since the appearance of his uncle, and exclaimed, looking full at him,

"Uncle Philip—Uncle Philip, won't you speak to *me?* You *will,* you *must!*"

The uncle then turned quickly round upon his nephew, and for the first time in court, their eyes met and they gazed at each other. "Uncle Philip," the prisoner continued, "*take* the book and give your evidence *like a man.* What are you afraid of? Your apparent unwillingness to tell the truth, must and will be taken for a dislike to injure me. I fear not anything you can say. The love you have borne my mother and myself is a guarantee to me that you will invent nothing. But at your hands at least I shall have justice, —my mother, my poor mother!"

The prisoner again burst into tears; the very mention of his mother's name was more than he could bear, and folding his arms on the rail before him, by the convulsive heaving of his broad shoulders everybody saw that he was sobbing.

The court sat wrapt in saddened silence, when Tom Courtenay roused himself again, and flinging back the clustering ringlets of his dark hair from his pallid brow, proudly and almost with an air of defiance, he called to his uncle to rouse himself, "Take, take the book, Uncle Philip, I know you will swear to nothing that you do not believe to be true."

"'Tis a very difficult thing, Tom," said his uncle, "and for all I have to say, it ain't much."

As he took the book, his nephew said in an undertone, "God help you, Uncle Philip, they might have spared you this, *for they had enough.*"

The witness Moran then deposed as follows.

"On the night that Widow Murphy's house was attacked, very late that night or towards morning, some persons called at my door and demanded whiskey; I refused to supply it at that hour. They said they were travellers, and were wet, and they *should* get it. It was moonlight. I looked out of the window and saw *three persons.* Thought I knew one man who stood a little aside. Told them to go home, and that they were *no strangers.* One of them swore they would smash in the door if it was not opened, and that they *had plenty of money and were willing to pay.* Thought the best way to get rid of them was to comply; lit a candle, and drew half a pint. Took it to the door, which I opened; two of them stepped inside, and said they were strangers, and that I ought to be ashamed of myself to keep them waiting so long in the rain. I turned the light on the man who stood a little back outside and said, 'There's one of you is no stranger at all events; Tom Courtenay, what's the matter, won't you come in and dry yourself?' He made no reply, and I told him he had better go home as fast as he could. Tom made no reply. Knew him

well ever since he was born ; was sure it was him. I am his uncle on his mother's side. He stood about four yards from the door ; he would not come in, and the other two men took the whiskey out to him and they drank it together."

The witness was then called on by the Crown to look at the prisoner in the dock, and to say positively on his oath, *was* he one of the men or *not ?*

The witness replied, "I am *positive* that Tom Courtenay who stands in the dock was one of the three men ; I knew him well, and saw him clearly. I did not know the other men, they were strangers to me."

Moran was then closely cross-examined, chiefly on the dress the prisoner wore, and if anything that cross-examination was in the prisoner's favour.

As the old man turned to go down he and his nephew stood within four feet of each other ; their eyes met in a fixed gaze for a moment, when the old man throwing his arms and shoulders suddenly across the rail that severed them, clasped his nephew round the neck and exclaimed, "Oh Tom, Tom, forgive me, but I could not wrong my soul !"

"Stand back, Uncle Philip," said Courtenay, "I know you have sworn what you believe to be true, and I would disown you if you could do otherwise, even to save my life."

The officers of the court then took the old man away,

and his sobs were heard as his footsteps died in the distance.

James Murphy, the son of the widow, was then examined. He was from home the night his mother's house was attacked; was induced to go from home to the fair, by the prisoner at the bar. The fair was eighteen or nineteen miles distant. Told prisoner that his objection to going was that it would keep him from home all night. That fair night, his mother's house was attacked; had he remained at home, and not have followed the prisoner's advice, there would have been a different tale to tell. He would not have gone to the fair *but for the prisoner*, who told him that he was sure to sell his calves better there than anywhere else.

Cross-examined; "Sold his calves well, got a good price for them, never sold any so well before. The best price for weaning calves he ever got. The advice the prisoner gave as to the calves *was good*."

This closed the cross-examination of witnesses for the Crown, and there was in court a decided feeling of commiseration for the prisoner, and a sort of hope against the possibility of hope, that he was innocent; but then came the crushing evidence in the widow's dying declaration, read in court in a silence of the most profound description.

When *that* was read, fixing upon him as it did, all the violence and brutality with which she had been treated,

and that death-bed revelation closing with the assertion that to Tom Courtenay, and *to Tom Courtenay alone, she laid her murder,* a murmur of horror, surprise and indignation ran through the court, and Tom Courtenay stood there in the opinion of all a convicted murderer, of the most cold blooded and inhuman kind, a disgrace to the human race.

Old Ned Courtenay was then examined for the defence. He was a pitiable object to behold, so depressed and worn down with grief. He could not, and would not swear positively that his son never left his home *that night;* he did not think he did, but he would not swear it. He might have done so, but he did not think he did.

Then came the leading witness for the defence, the prisoner's younger brother "Billy," a handsome lad sixteen years of age. He looked on the crowded court and at his brother without betraying any emotion, took the book in his hand and kissed it with as much steadiness as if it had been an act of daily occurrence.

"Recollected the night the widow's house was attacked. Slept on that night in the bed with his brother. He and his brother locked the house door about ten o'clock that night, hung the key where it was always hung, behind the parlour door. His brother got into bed first, he slept next the wall; witness slept on the outside. Prisoner and witness both said their prayers before they got into bed. Prisoner was in bed

in the morning when witness awoke, turned several times in the course of the night, swears on his solemn oath that the prisoner was in bed on all those occasions. There was a chair by the bedside; he could reach and put his hand upon it. His brother took his clothes off first and laid them on the chair, then he, the witness took his off, and laid them on his brother's. He was the first up in the morning, and to the best of his belief the clothes had not been touched since they had put them there over night. On the day his brother was taken, witness's father asked him if he couldn't clear Tom? He replied he could, upon all the books that were ever shut or opened. His mother clapped her hands and said, Thank God!"

Cross-examined by Mr. Funkem: The prisoner had other clothes in the room; he *could* have got them unbeknown to him, or without touching those on the chair.

"Could he have left the house without your knowledge?"

"'Twas *just possible*, but was positive he did not."

"Do you mean to swear, sir, he did *not* do that which it *was* possible he *could* have done *without* your knowing it?"

"I'll tell you——"

"No, sir; you will tell me nothing until you give me a direct answer. I ask you again, sir, for the last time, will you take it upon yourself to swear that the

prisoner did not leave the house that night, *after* you and he went to bed ?"

"I will *not* swear it positively."

"You may go down, sir."

"Stay one moment," said the judge; "you were going to say something just now, what was it ?"

"I was going to say, my lord, that I would not swear positively to anything I did not actually know of my own knowledge. Though I am quite satisfied that my brother did not leave the house that night, yet as the possibility does exist that he *could* have done so without my knowing it, however safe I might believe myself to be in swearing it, I think it would be wrong to do so."

"A very honest answer, my good boy," broke in Sergeant Boozlem, "and stamps truth upon every tittle of your evidence."

The witness then became much affected, and put his handkerchief to his eyes, as people thought to screen his brother from his sight, but the latter as he passed, grasped him by the shoulder and said, "God bless you, Billy, you're quite right; I feared your love for me might make you deviate from the truth, but I need not have thought it for a moment."

The chief of the police was then examined on the part of the prisoner. Found the prisoner at breakfast with his family. Not the least appearance of guilt or confusion when he went in. Knew that the previous

night had been very wet. Examined the prisoner's clothes and shoes. They were perfectly dry. At prisoner's wish examined some clothes in a box, they were quite dry and neatly folded up, also his great coat and hat; they were not even damp. Searched for pistols, fire-arms, or money, found none, not anything of a suspicious nature. Could give the prisoner an excellent character for the four years he had known him, and his character throughout the country was extremely good; he was sober, peaceable and very well conducted, and was never known to be in bad society.

The chief of the police was then cross-examined as to whether it was possible or not for the clothes to have been dried after the outrage had been perpetrated, and he admitted the bare possibility of it, but still was of opinion that it had not been done.

Then came a flood of evidence as to character, from persons who had known Tom Courtenay all his life, and if anything *could* have borne up against the crushing evidence of guilt that had been adduced, that mass of favourable opinion might have been of service, but what could avail against the *sworn identity*, so distinctly sworn to by so many witnesses, the friends and relations of his life?

The judge then slowly turned himself round towards the jury, and made a very long pause, so long that whispers arose that he was only waiting for the buzz, which always takes place at that important moment in

a crowded court, to subside: but there might have been some cause for that brief but deep consideration, other than external noise.

Those who were in the court never have forgotten that address to the jury, the tone of voice of the judge, his views of the evidence, and his periods. He closed his address and never once in the whole course of it used the hackneyed phrase, "on the other hand, gentlemen." Alas! there was *no* "other hand" to turn to; nor did the judge close with those often used words, "if they had a doubt, a reasonable doubt." There was, there could be *no doubt:* if a doubt *had* existed, the whole evidence as to identity must have been disbelieved.

The address concluded as follows. "I leave then the case with you, gentlemen of the jury, and I do so with a firm persuasion, that, as upright and conscientious men you will do your duty without respect to persons, and fearless of the result, founded on the evidence, *and the evidence alone,* which has been brought before you."

Then followed the usual hum and buzz, the wiping of faces, and the standing up and sitting down of those who had seats, and the shuffling of feet of those weary of maintaining one position. Not a man, woman, nor child, left the court, though some of them had not tasted food for twelve hours; they tarried for the return of the jury, nor *had they to wait* long, it was less than half an hour. The delay arose not from any doubt in

any juror's mind, but solely and entirely on their dislike to enter and deliver the fatal word. They came at last and settled into their places in the box. The clerk of the Crown, taking a paper from the foreman's hand, then read over the names of the jury, and pronounced with a loud voice, the verdict, "*Guilty!*" adding the futile sentence to it, "Have you anything to say why sentence of death and execution should not be passed upon you?"

The prisoner on hearing the word, "guilty," clasped his hands together, stretched his arms along the front rail, and laid his face down on the back of his hands. In that position he remained in the death-like surrounding silence of the crowded court, ever hushed as all noise is, when the dread sentence of death is passed.

During this awful pause, the judge had fixed his eyes on some imaginary object in the air, but at length he uttered the word, "Prisoner."

At that word the hopeless convict, for such he was now, started to his full height, and pushing back the curls of his long dark hair which, from the leaning position he had before assumed, had fallen over his handsome face, he fixed his eyes on the judge and stood motionless to receive his doom.

"Prisoner," repeated the judge again.

"My lord," said the prisoner, "I have been asked if I have anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon me. If the question be not an insult or a mockery, may I be permitted to say a few words

to the court? Not, I am aware, because these words can have any influence on my fate, but, my lord, that they may be remembered when I am no more."

The judge made no answer, giving him leave, a tacit leave to proceed, rather than any direct permission to do so.

"My lord, and gentlemen of the jury," continued the death-doomed man, "I have been found guilty of a crime of which the great God in heaven above us knows that I am as innocent as the babe unborn. A convicted murderer, about to receive sentence of death, I stand before all, all—who have known me since infancy who have loved and respected me, and who in this court to-day, have testified to their good opinion. There *may be eyes now looking at me* and ears listening to me, 'houts,' 'spalpeens,' nay, the actual perpetrators of this outrage, robbery, and murder, may be in this very court now, holding a hard cheek, but without some manifest interposition of the divine will, the actual criminals will see me thrust into a disgraceful grave, to be soon forgotten as one not to be remembered or only alluded to as a warning to the most degraded. In this court, I say, my lord, those eyes as well as kinder ones, *may be* at this moment regarding me, yet I am doomed to die."

The convict paused here, and looked all round the court at the crowd who were intensely listening to every word he said, the silence only broken or rendered more

oppressive by the stifled sobs of women's sorrow, and among those sobs a sudden terrible cry arose, of "ahoon, ahoon, asthore, a suillish machree mavourneen," it was the voice of his mother in her living agony.

"I have no hope," continued the convict, "that those base enough to commit the awful crime for which I am innocently to suffer, if they have seen the dread proceedings of this court to-day, will in themselves face the death which *ought* to be their doom, *not* mine, and from which I admit that I see no hope of escaping. Alas! I *have* no hope unless God in his goodness comes to my aid in his all powerful mercy."

At this moment there was a great bustle in the centre of the dense crowd immediately behind the dock; a strong looking man had fainted from the excessive heat, and was carried out into the open air.

When the bustle occasioned by this incident had subsided, the convict proceeded, turning his eyes from the place where the accident had occurred, again upon the judge.

"As I was saying, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, the real murderers of the poor widow may hear me, but they, in their degraded natures will be unmoved by any remorse or repentance, and thus they will commit another murder; but mark me, *all* who hear me, justice *will* overtake them sooner or later, and my character will be redeemed, but not perhaps till I am rotten in the grave."

The judge frowned and looked as if he disapproved of the language, and would have stopped him, but the convict at once proceeded.

"Pardon my expressions, my lord, but this is no time for choice of words. While asserting my innocence, as from my soul I do, I do not quarrel with your lordship's charge or with the verdict of the jury. I know not how to quarrel with the evidence. I never injured any one of the witnesses, so they *can* bear me *no spite;* for them I have entertained no other feeling than that of respect and high esteem, for one of them perhaps a stronger sentiment altogether. This latter fact has been alluded to by the able and anxious counsel who kindly undertook my defence, and it is one in reference to the witness Catherine Murphy. The evidence given by Catherine though utterly impossible for me to account for as to the identification of myself, well knowing, as I do, that I was not there, was in other respects correct; we regarded each other at one time as lovers, and I have loved her still. If I interrupted my counsel in a hasty manner thus in the last opportunity in this world that will be mine, I beg his pardon, and I wish to clear Catherine from the shadow of any blame that may cling to her in having been one of the erring means that has brought about my condemnation and degraded death. I cannot believe that the poor old widow her mother, rushed into the presence of her Maker with an *intentional* lie upon her lips. I look with inexplicable

wonder upon it all on the entire and consequent body of evidence, and turn, without hope in this life to submit to the will of heaven.

"As to my conversation with James Murphy about going to the 'fair of Grange,' he is the only witness who has sworn the truth, but is it likely that if I contemplated robbery and murder in his absence, having recommended him to leave home *that night*, I should have committed the atrocity and *remained on the spot for his return?* I did *not* fly, and you have heard how and where I was found, as innocent of the crime as you are, my lord, and apprehending, caring for no danger that it was in the power of man to make for me.

"Intimately as I was known to the poor widow, to Catherine, and to the servant-girl, is it likely that I should have gone to the house undisguised, and have lit a candle by which for them to swear to me?

"Again, can I believe that my uncle, Philip Moran, the only brother of that poor soul whose heart I see almost breaking and so close beneath your lordship's bench, and which heart may in mercy, perhaps, be cold before my own, *can* I believe that *he* would join in so foul a conspiracy, the success of which could only be brought about by perjury of the deepest and most extensive dye, and that to doom his sister's blood to a death unexpected and undeserved? The weight of evidence against me seems, even to me, to be inexplica-

bly conclusive. What then, is my answer to be? Why, my lord, and gentlemen of the jury, here, in the face of you all, and what is infinitely more, in the face of heaven and my God, in answer to the challenge of what I have to say, I do say that I am *Not* Guilty.

"For some mysterious purpose, my lord, that neither you nor I can fathom, the will of an inscrutable providence overwhelms me with a guilt from which there seems to be no human way of escaping. A fatal delusion has fallen on the minds of *all* the witnesses, save one, against me: to dispel it, alone rests in the might of heaven, and if even at this, the expiration of the eleventh hour, it is *His will to save me*, how shall I ever be able to *thank His mercy?* I *have* no hope in man."

The poor, handsome, firm and eloquent criminal ceased. Not a motion, no stir of any sort, not even a sigh could be heard in court, though deep buried in firmly pressed hands and handkerchiefs, the low choked convulsive sobs from women's lips beat like the throbbings of a broken heart. All eyes save those blinded by the agony of grief, turned upon the judge, who paused in his searching look on Tom Courtenay ere he commenced the condemnation.

"Thomas Courtenay," said the judge, "I have listened with all the attention which I considered your unhappy position demanded, to your statement. Every person in court, as well as the jury, has heard the evidence on

which you have been convicted, and in the justice and propriety of that verdict, there is not one solitary individual but must concur—nay, you yourself have done so. They have also heard your statement; and whether that statement be an aggravation of the crime or not, I must leave to be settled by the final Judge *before whom you must soon appear*. I shall only add, that if your statement *be false*—and I cannot reconcile its being otherwise when contrasted with the evidence—you will find perhaps when too late that it will indeed be a dreadful aggravation."

Thomas Courtenay was of course sentenced to be hanged, in the usual words, upon the next day but one following this extraordinary trial. The convict was then removed from the dock in the midst of the usual howls, screams, and protestations of his relatives and friends, country-men and women, and the almost insane grief of poor little Barney McDermott, to whom he had restored his reft five-penny piece doubled with the addition of another, when taken from him by "bully McGuire." The poor little fellow was still but a "Leprehaun," and his grief would not let him rest, he roved about the roads and fields in his sorrow for the fate of his benefactor, and shaking his fists in the air, he called for vengeance on all the "shibbecahs," the cruel Saxons had sent, the "gomerals," the "hoots," that they were to spill the ould Irish blood; closing his howls with shouts that, "it *was* the Leprehaun that had made the

witnesses belave a lie. The lie, the lie, the lie, the lie, he knew it was."

When the court was adjourned, the town relapsed into its usual silence and quietude, the business of assize was not heavy, the judge in the "Record court" had nothing to do, and Sir William Smith, who had presided at the trial of Thomas Courtenay, leaving the further adjudication of the cases yet to be tried in the hands of his learned brother, left with an escort provided by the sheriff, for the next town on the circuit, travelling, as luck would have it, in a fine moonlight night.

The chief of the constabulary retired to rest, tired both in mind and body, the whole town was still, and it seemed as if man and the machination of men were sunk into oblivion, or as if nothing moved in the world but the pale bright moonbeams that waned towards the west and flickered as they passed on surface of pool or river. Heaven slept not!—The orbs, the mighty lights above, never altogether wan nor dim, cease not in their vigil on the christian world. An eye never closed, and never weary in that glorious supervision, still pierced the darkest nooks, and saw through the deeds of the existing world.

Ferris and his brother constables had retired to the lodgings they had selected by the mere toss of a Manx halfpenny, as before described, and tired with the duties of the day, were preparing for bed; they had

undressed themselves and had lain down, and were asleep all but Ferris, who ready to get into bed himself, only paused to put out the light. Just as he had extinguished it, he heard the door of an adjoining room open, and saw by a light breaking through a chink in the wall that some one bearing a candle had come into it. Now Ferris was one of those cautious constables who suspected artificial lights at midnight, as much as he did the darkest holes of infamy, and never lost an opportunity of learning all he could. He stole therefore to the interstice through which the light made its way, and peeped to see who his neighbour, or his neighbours were.

No more thoughts of going to bed *then;* his whole frame became as rigid as if he had been made of marble; his eye seemed to glue itself to the little aperture, and his lips to compress his breathing. There, in the next room, he beheld, arranging themselves at a little table, with some whiskey and a couple of glasses on it, two men. One of the men who was seated at the table faced him, the light of the candle was full on his features. Each feature, each lock of hair was confessed, and to his intense astonishment there sat "Thomas Courtenay," the doomed convict, escaped the very night of his trial and conviction from the condemned cell!

The other man sat so that he could not see *his* face, but that was no matter. Beyond the remotest doubt *there sat Thomas Courtenay,* and if a doubt could have

existed, which under the circumstances might have been natural enough, the conversation which immediately ensued, carried on in an underbreath, at once dispelled it. Every word of this conversation came to the crevice, and was received by the wondering ears of the constable, *erectis auribus*, and with a downright anxious will!

"Well, Tom, my boy," said the man whose face he could not see, "for I can't help calling you 'Tom,' though you bid me not, I hope I may congrathulate you now, in your escape from 'a shan rogharas,' and the 'barradle dhu.' 'Chorp au dioul,' don't ye think you may say you're safe? Give us your hand, old boy, and here's your health!"

Tom Courtenay regarded him with a contemptuous curl of the lip, Tom's old expression all over, and letting him take his hand rather than giving it him, replied,

"Yes, I hope we're safe from *that* job, but recollect, Martin, there are other things we have been in to the full as bad, if not worse than the widow's, and the sooner we are clean gone out of the country the better; 'chorp au dioul,' my heart misgives me, but we may come to 'suggy shoe' yet!"

"Your heart is quite right for *once*, my lad," thought Ferris to himself; but Ferris never did anything in a hurry, so he was always right, and as long as these men conversed he would not stir nor awaken his brother

officers. "He was," he thought to himself, "in receipt of a bag full of information of the right sort."

"Don't be downhearted, man," replied Martin to his companion.

"Downhearted! you've no right to twit me *there*. Didn't I stand it like a brick, while you turned as pale as if you had seen the Bodagh Buic, augh! be me soul, I never see such a 'spalpeen,' as you were to-day, tumbling down as if you were shot, in a fainting fit! You were nearly spoiling it all."

"Well, well," interrupted the other, "be dad, you've said enough about that before we came in here. I couldn't help it for the soul of me. When I thought of the ould widow's screams, and the blood on her grey hairs when you laid it into her the second time, and the burning and what not; and then in court all eyes seemed suddenly fixed on us, or at least on where we stood; the place got as hot as hell, and I fainted dead away. 'Twasn't fear though, 'twas the bad beer we swilled into us, last night. 'Twas that what you call unmanned me. You said you would not bring it up agin me again, so no more about it. You talked just now of our cutting; what's your dodge, Tom, tell us all about it?"

"My plan's just this, Misther Martin—to drink my share of this half pint of the crater, no more, smoke a pipe, and be the best half of our way to Galway before daylight; will that do, Misther Martin?"

"Right well, Tom, there's not another man in Ireland would have escaped as you have done this day."

They then drank and helped themselves again.

While this was going on, Ferris had reached to the stool on which he had put his clothes, and was stealing into them like a mouse, listening and peeping at the men, not for all the world to lose one word of their conversation. He was glad to see what no man ever saw before, and that was Tom Courtenay charging a pipe, and preparing to smoke.

This was "nuts and apples" to "Ferris," as he said, for it gave him a little space for business, and he of all others was not the constable to neglect it, nor to spoil a job, as I have said before, by too much haste. He, as he thought, had heard quite enough, or as much as he had time to listen to, an intention having been announced of being "half way to Galway before daylight." Ferris therefore stole, as the cat creeps, slowly and noiselessly, to his sleeping companions, and not waking them too abruptly, he whispered close in their ears, "Hush, not the least noise, get up—dress, and our fortens are made. By the souls of ye all, no noise."

The constables having accomplished, not their fortunes, but dressing themselves, Ferris told them, then, who was in the outside room, and sent them in their "*stockin'* feet," but with their bayonets, through the little door by which they had entered their room, to the outer door of the room where Tom Courtenay

and his "pal" were drinking, to prevent the escape of the men, but to stand fast till they heard him enter that room by the door that opened into it from the one they were put to sleep in. When they heard him make the arrest, then they were to rush in and secure the men. This done, and the constables on their "stocking feet," gone to their post, Ferris stole back to the crevice in the door and saw Tom Courtenay and his friend still smoking their pipes. With a sudden and strong wrench at the handle of the door, shoulder and knee set against its panels at the same time, the door flew open and Ferris seized Tom Courtenay by the collar, who seized him in return and endeavoured to throw him. At the same moment Courtenay's companion was collared by another constable, the table and candle overturned and knocked out, and for a moment the struggle was severe; but, outnumbered and unarmed, the villains were ultimately secured, and a light being obtained, safely handcuffed and very shortly afterwards lodged in the barracks of the police.

It was at a late hour that night, tired in mind and body, as I have said before, on which the chief constable had retired to rest, when he was roused out of his first sleep, about two in the morning, by a thundering knock at the street door. The chief felt that it must mean a summons for him, but he put his head out of the window, and asked "who was there?"

"Oh come down, sir, come down as fast as you can!"

said Ferris, who with another constable stood at the door.

"Why, what on earth's the matter now?"

"Oh, come down, sir; dress yourself smart, (quick) and come down, sir, and I'll tell you."

The manner of the constable conveyed at once, to his chief, that the matter in hand was most important, so the chief dressed himself and came down immediately. Something serious had certainly happened, and the chief as he descended felt a dreadful presentiment that the report Ferris had to make was, that Tom Courtenay had put an end to himself to escape the ignominious death. The astonishment of the chief constable may be imagined, when Ferris told him that "Tom Courtenay had made his escape from gaol, and that he, Ferris, had again arrested him in a public-house in the town."

"Quite and entirely impossible," said the chief, "on every account impossible! out of the question; this is some mistake."

"Quite true, nevertheless, yer honour. I have him in the police barrack not forty perch from where you stand, and what's more, sir, I've one of the fellows that was with him at the widow's house, and who I am sure assisted him to make his escape. You remember the red-haired thief that Kitty swore she'd know again?"

"I know what Kitty said, and all about it, but you

are dreaming, Ferris, and out of your senses. Impossible, I don't believe one word of it."

"Augh bedad, an' why not, sir, why wouldn't he assist the escape if he could? and by my soul, yer honour, if it had not been for Edmond Ferris, he'd been a free bird afore morning. Come down to the barrack, sir, yourself and belave your own eyes, if you won't belave me; may be you belave what your own eyes see?"

"Hardly," replied the chief; "what said he, Ferris, when you took him? How knew you that he had escaped, and where did you find him? Does he now confess to the murder?"

"He's never opened his lips since I took him, yer honour, but I heard him and his companion talking the whole business over before I made the capture. How they attacked the widow, how they treated her, and how they escaped. There's no doubt of his guilt now! Faith, how he put the 'Furraun' to-day, or I may say yesterday, what a swate tongue he's got to tell a lie! He had almost pursuaded *me*, at one time, that he *was innocent*. By the powers, what stuff!"

The chief and his men then repaired to the barracks, when on entering the day-room, the chief indeed beheld "Tom Courtenay" sitting on a form, handcuffed to another man, and a policeman on either side of them standing guard. He had changed his clothes certainly, but did not seem to have had time to cut his hair or otherwise disguise himself. There was a ferocity in his

eye, however, that was not visible at his trial, and the expression in his pale handsome features had undergone a marked change. The chief constable looked him full in the face, and said, "God help you, Tom Courtenay, what is this you have done?"

He neither looked at his questioner nor uttered a word.

Regarding him then as a condemned and hardened hypocrite, the chief left the room and gave orders that he should not be permitted to see nor speak to anyone. The chief then repaired to a magistrate, in company with Ferris, and roused him up with as little ceremony as his sub-constables had shown him.

While they were waiting at the magistrate's door, Ferris put his hand into his pocket, and producing an Isle of Man halfpenny, in the palm of his hand, fully lit up by the morning moon, said to his chief, "Do you see this, sir?"

The chief at once recognised the coin with the three legs kicking every way upon it.

"I wouldn't take a five-pound note, sir, for that halfpenny. I never in all my life won a toss, except the one I won with that, and it was the means, with God's blessing, of my re-taking Tom Courtenay; 'tis the one the Tubbercullen boys and us tossed up with, as to where we'd stop in town. Had I lost the toss, we'd have gone to McCoy's, and then Courtenay had been clane gone for iver."

The door of the magistrate's house was then opened,

and they were shown in, and shortly after, the justice himself put in an appearance. The chief then narrated the circumstance, and the magistrate showed as great a doubt of the matter as the chief had done in the first instance; but on arriving at the barrack and judging with his own eyes, no doubt any longer remained in his mind.

Courtenay *was* there, and safely handcuffed to an accomplice. On this, the magistrate resolved to await the usual hour of the opening of the gaol, and, in company with the chief of the police, to see the governor's astonishment, and then to investigate the means by which the escape had been effected.

At the right time they proceeded on their mission, and as they turned the corner which brought them in front of the prison, the gates had been just then opened, and they saw the governor, early as it was, standing in front of them, looking steadfastly on the ground, with his hands in his black velveteen jacket pockets.

"He knows nothing of it yet," said the chief to the justice.

"Oh, he must," was the reply; "look at him."

They now came close up to the governor; there was nothing of excitement about him; if anything there was in his appearance a touch of contemplative melancholy, the downcast look of which had struck the observation of the justice.

"This is a bad business, sir," said the magistrate; "but it might have been worse."

"Worse, sir! My God, sir, how could it have been worse? the poor, poor young fellow!"

"*Poor* young fellow! there's not much pity due to him. He might have escaped; he was within a snap of your fingers of being clean gone."

"Escaped—clean gone—what *do* you mean? No, no, poor fellow, I am quite certain he would not have moved a step to save himself from death had the gates been set wide open all night."

The magistrate and the chief constable looked at each other, and knew that the governor of the gaol had not heard a word of the escape.

"Was it late last night when you saw him?" said the chief; "or when did you see him last?"

"Poor fellow!" the governor replied, "I had but just left him when you came up; and in the face of all the evidence, I declare to Heaven, gentlemen, that somehow or other I believe him innocent. If ever a man *was* hanged in the wrong, that man will be."

"What!" cried the justice and the chief constable together, "do you really say that Tom Courtenay *is* here—that he has *not* made his escape?"

"Oh, gentlemen," replied the governor, "this is no time for joking; I am not able to share in your fun, indeed I am not, and did not expect any on *this* subject from you. Poor young man, I never saw so

reconciled a creature to the terrible fate awaiting him; he says but for his mother he should have no regret. God help him in his hour of need."

"Indeed," said the justice and the officer, "we are *not* joking; it would be worse than cruel at such a time to do so; but far beyond a doubt, Tom Courtenay *did* make his escape last night or this morning, and has been *retaken*, with one of his accomplices. The police will be here with them in a few minutes. Constable Ferris heard him confess the lead he took in the transaction to an accomplice, and recaptured Courtenay and the other man on the spot."

The governor stared at them as if he thought they were mad, when the justice, observing the excitement into which the governor was getting, asked him "when indeed he had seen the prisoner last."

"Not ten minutes ago, as I have told you—when you came up I told you I had *just* left him. But come, seeing is believing, at least, it used to be—come and judge for yourselves," and saying this, the governor, with tears in his eyes, led the way.

"Is the governor right in his senses?" thought his two guests, as they followed him; "has he misjudged the hour of his last interview with Courtenay? He will be surprised when he finds that the bird *is* flown."

On arriving at the door of the condemned cell the governor gently opened it, *and there sat Tom Courtenay—the real Tom Courtenay—the recently doomed-*

to-die Tom Courtenay—as calm and as handsome as ever.

The justice signed to the governor not to say anything as to the cause of the visit; so having tarried with the poor sufferer a few moments, they left him once more to the solitude of his miserable cell.

On returning to the governor's house they saw the police with the prisoners entering at the gate, in the direction of the ante-room where all examinations were held, and as they reached the door the governor seized the chief of the police by the arm, and exclaimed, "Good Heaven! *how like; I see it all.* The resemblance so perfect; it is an utter misapprehension—a mistaken identity."

The prisoners were then examined. The likeness to Tom Courtenay said, in answer to the questions put to him, "that his name was Michael Lynch; that he was from Galway; he knew of no crime that he had committed, nor why nor wherefore he had been taken up by that gentleman," nodding his head towards Ferris, and having said this he shut up and refused to say one word more. He, the likeness of Tom Courtenay, was then removed, and the other prisoner brought in. As they passed each other, the one that was going out said in a low voice, "A *dark* night, friend," at the same time bestowing on the man a significant look.

"Dum's the word again," thought the chief. But so it was *not*. After being cautioned as to anything

he might say, he announced his name as Martin Cooney. He cared not for the caution he got, one straw, he'd tell the truth if he was to be hanged for it the next minute. "An' it's longing I am to tell it, since I heard *him* spake," nodding his head towards the gaol.

He was again cautioned, and told that "anything he might now say would be taken down."

"So be it, so be it, gentlemen; I'll make a clane breast and tell everything. I have enough upon me, and I'll have no more, least of all, the blood of that poor, innocent young man. My companion's real name is Peter Hopkins, I don't know what other name he may have given you. He's from one village with me in the county Mayo. 'Twas he and I and another boy, no matter who, what broke into the Widow Murphy's house and robbed and murthered her; I'll tell upon the third hand if I'm obliged. Tom Courtenay never set a foot near *that* house; but Hopkins *is so like him*, that everybody who saw Hopkins that night thought it was the other. If you daunt belave what I say, look into his breeches pocket now at this moment, and ye'll find, by the life of me, a purse—an old purse—with marks or lethers upon it; that purse belonged to the widow's daughter, Catherine Murphy. She'll know it agin if you show it her."

"Bedad, you'll niver find it in the pocket of him any more," said Ferris, with a grin, at the same time

producing the purse. "Surely I got it in his pocket just now, when I searched him. Here it is, gentlemen, and money enough in it too," and he laid it on the table.

"I've tould ye no lies, thin, gentlemen, and thank the powers I'm taken, for *that young man is innocent.* I fainted in the court-house yesterday while he was speaking; whatever it was come over me I don't know, but from that moment I've been not meself nor the likes of me. Oh, Tom Courtenay, a hair of your head shall niver fall through me; I'm taken, and thank God for it. I don't mean, gentlemen, to say that I'm not bad enough; there's three warrants out agin me in the county Mayo for different crimes, but murther's not among them."

Everything he said was taken down, and he gave the name and residence of the third man in this outrage, and declared himself "much easier now that he had told all."

The prisoners were then committed for re-examination, and confined in separate cells.

The next step was to send for Catherine Murphy, in order to see if she could identify Martin Cooney, and what she would say on seeing Peter Hopkins. For this purpose the two prisoners were placed in the yard with ten or twelve others, and they stood next each other but two. Catherine was brought to the door and told to look through a small square hole and say if

among those men she saw *anybody she knew*, or had *ever seen before*.

She knew nothing of what had recently taken place. Her eyes ranged from one end to the other of the row. On reaching Cooney on each occasion they stopped and gazed for some seconds upon him; they also paused, but not for so long, as they fell on Hopkins; she seemed pained to look at him, and while looking at him she turned very pale. At length, speaking to the magistrate, she said, "Yes, sir, *I do recognise another* of the men who attacked our house."

"Point out where he stands," replied the justice.

"He's standing there, sir, next but two to—to poor Tom Courtenay, who was convicted yesterday, but whose dress is changed since then. That's him with the red hair; he's the man that Winnie Cox grappled with; I'd take my oath to him on a hundred books, and there's the scar upon his brow."

The magistrate said, "Be careful, Miss Murphy, Thomas Courtenay, the poor fellow against whom you gave your evidence, *is not in the yard at all*."

She did not appear to believe this, and scrutinised him again very closely.

"Is that *not* him?" she said, in a tremulous tone, every portion of her dress quivering like aspen leaves and her lips turning as white as a sheet. "*That*—the one next but two on the right of the man with the red hair?"

"*No*, that is *not* Tom Courtenay," replied both the magistrate and the governor; "he is *not in the yard at all.*"

She seemed greatly confused at this, and the large drops of perspiration stood out on her fair forehead as thick as summer rain on flowers.

"Take me to a room, in kindness *do*, and give me a glass of water; I see the men who murdered my mother, as I have murdered you, poor, poor Tom Courtenay," and then, before they could reach the door to take her to a room she fainted dead away. They then removed Hopkins by order of the magistrate; it was one of those orders often made by magistrates, the reason or cause for which no other brain than that of a puzzled justice could by any possibility devise, and they brought Winnie Cox to look at the men in the yard. Now Winnie Cox was a thoroughly Irish pissant gal, with a very peculiar figure. She was short and colossal in shape, formed from chin to her feet like the boll of a large tree—no ins and outs behind or before—her waist the same size as the bottom of her dress, and all this surmounted by a very small round head, on a short thick neck. The boys when they romped with her said she never could be upset from those legs of hers, and her short, thick red arms never could be torn away from anything they chose to hold, and in her elbows there were two very funny indentations like—I know not what.

"Augh, be the holy Virgin!" she exclaimed, when she saw Martin Cooney, "be the powers above, that's he—that's the *Bodagh Rhue*, the mighty ugly divle what I got hoult to. Let me in—let me git at him, 'tis all I ask, and that too wid my bare hands, and then I'll be afther givin him a skinful of broken bones, a blackguard, to carry to the new mimber o' Parliament. Och, won't I, a shan roghara, dhar ma chorp, but I'll be the death of him!" Screaming, struggling, and mad with angry excitement, Winnie Cox was then forcibly carried away.

It was then arranged that no communication of any sort should be made to Courtenay, as the magistrate with the chief of the police were to post off that instant to the judge who had condemned the supposed criminal to death, with a full account of the circumstances.

In half-an-hour, having breakfasted, they were posting off in a chaise-and-pair to the judge, leaving the whole town behind them swarming like bees in a hive, with the rumour that after all Thomas Courtenay was innocent of the crime laid to his charge. They arrived at the judge's lodgings, and were immediately shown up.

'Well, gentlemen," said his lordship, "'twas late yesterday when I saw you last; you have come post haste, I see; what has happened since I left? I almost anticipate your reply, sir; pray tell me at once."

"My lord, Tom Courtenay——"

"Ah!" interrupted the judge, "I feared it, he should

have been looked to more closely, I left the place in a very unhappy state of mind on his account—I had my doubts as to his guilt."

"My lord, Tom Courtenay *is innocent*," shouted the magistrate in intense excitement. "The real murderers are taken, and one of them has confessed."

"I knew it, I knew it, I could not be mistaken in the steady truth he uttered. Thomas Courtenay innocent! I felt he was, at least I hoped he was; but how do you break down the testimony of guilt? It must have been a conspiracy."

"No, my lord, there is no conspiracy."

The judge looked surprised.

"A mistaken identity, my lord, from a most extraordinary resemblance between the two men."

The judge then received the full report.

"Does your lordship think that we may at once communicate these facts to Thomas Courtenay, and tell him forthwith of his unexpected and happy deliverance?"

"Promptly and distinctly the moment you return, 'tis but humanity to do so. Acquaint him that his life is safe in the most kind and gentle way you can, the most agreeable way that you may think of as to his feelings. But tell him not to permit the firmness he has possessed throughout, to give way in this sudden change. It may be some days, perhaps many, before his discharge can be legally effected. Let him be treated with the

utmost kindness, and let the friends he most values have access to him. Treat him for the time being as a prisoner detained, but not as a felon or convict. His life is safe and his liberty not far off."

As they left his lordship, he called the chief constable back to him, and said, "Mind how you break this news to poor Thomas Courtenay, he is a young man of very extraordinary temperament, of a very fine mind and peculiarly sensitive; select your means then, well, and convey the intelligence to him in the way that will best suit his mind and inclination." With that permissive caution from the judge, the magistrate and the chief of the police returned to the county town.

Tom Courtenay was seated on the edge of his bed, resting his arms on the table, reviewing in his mind an extraordinary dream he had had on the previous night, when the gentle noise of a key sliding from without into the lock of his cell door, made him turn his eyes that way. It was not like the usual noise of the thrust into the lock of the key when in his gaoler's hand, but it came stealthily and so slowly that he had time to speculate on who it could be coming. At last the door opened, the figure of a man on the outside drew back, and Catherine Murphy stood before him. There was a calmness about her pale face and very handsome figure that seemed almost unnatural, but she maintained it and seating herself on the bedside by Courtenay, with the words "Tom, I am come to see you," she gazed at

him for a moment, her bosom heaving and labouring with what she had to say, and how she was to say it.

"Catherine, Catherine," said Tom, but in a mournful, though kind tone; "this is very good of you; my hours are but few and I wish to die, as I really am, at peace with all those who gave what they believed to be evidence against me. At peace with all mankind, save with the murderers of your poor mother; for them I have no peace, and had I it in my power I would paralyze the villain's arm that struck you."

"O thank you, Tom," replied Catherine, not yet having made up her mind as to what she should say, "it is very good of you to be so kind to me after all I have done against you, but, Tom, I *knew* I was mistaken in what I swore to, and I am sure I was, and you must forgive me."

"No more sure, my dear girl, than I was, but it cannot be helped now; I do forgive you, and I feel your kindness in coming to take leave of me. I had strange wild dreams last night, I have wondered how I could ever fall asleep at all; but I dreamed that I was in some foreign land, and that a horde of savages, such as I have read of, in war-paint and armed with knives and tomahawks were pursuing me; it seemed to me then that James Murphy was one of them; instead of any other weapon James had a rope which he swung round him like a lasso, and cried, 'Keep back, keep back, let me have him, 'twas my mother he murdered,' and he flung

the rope at me but missed, and then pursued me again. My strength was fast failing, I could run no farther, the savages closed upon me, brandishing their knives, and the knife of your brother, as well as the rope in his hand, was in the air to stab me to the heart, and bind me, when some man whom I did not know, rushed in, and striking down your brother's arm, who had now raised the noose to put it round my neck, called aloud, 'Murphy, touch not *that* man, that's Tom Courtenay, I charge you touch him not, 'twas I that did it.'

"I suppose then, that my dreaming soul was for a space quiet, for when I dreamed again I was in those little fields, surrounded by the wild heaths, where you and I, Catherine, used to play together as children. When you found the hedge sparrow's nest, with its little blue eggs, and told me, knowing my birds'-nesting inclination, not to touch them, and if I did not you would love me all your life, I did not touch them, but—no matter. We then gathered, or seemed to gather, the wild flowers and made daisy chains, as we used to, for in my dream I thought we were children again, and all those sweet airs that stirred your ringlets and fanned my cheek at that time seemed whispering over us once more, while the same bright sky and glorious sunbeams lit up our little world, and made you shade your eyes to look at me when I stood over you with fresh flowers to add to those already in your lap. The dream changed again, the savages were there, but retiring; the man

who had delivered me from them, and from your brother and the rope, remained alone and cried, 'tis I that have saved your life.'

"I looked at him, and to show the vain imaginings of sleep, good God! I saw myself—a second separate self; 'twas as if I stood out of myself, and looked with my own eyes into two other eyes that were my own. I seemed to have heard myself say, 'twas I that did it,' and yet there was a vague feeling in my proper self that my innocence was proved and I was saved. These strange fantasies, these baseless imaginings are over, and, to show how they impress the senses with delusions, I thought this morning—alas! it could have been but thought—that up through that little window above my head there came upon the air the words, 'If that be true then it saves Tom Courtenay's life.' It's all in vain, Catherine; if there was anything approaching to salvation in this world they would never have let me linger on in misery." As he said this he laid his forehead on his hands on the table, which was in reach of his bed, and seemed overcome with helpless sorrow.

In this abandonment of despair, he felt a hand upon his shoulder; it came as gently as the fall of a withered leaf or flake of snow, no word accompanied it. Light as it was, he felt its weight, he found its warmth, it pressed him and he looked up.

Catherine's handsome countenance and beautiful

eyes, the latter dimmed with tears, met him, but they had so strange, so heavenly an expression in them that he almost started to his feet.

"Tom," she said, "be calm and hear me, for I have much to tell. In the first place, Tom, 'mavourneen asthore,' I have to throw myself on your forgiveness for having sworn falsely against you. I know that not a syllable I said against you was true, for I have seen the 'bodach,' the 'voghard,' whom we all mistook for you, and my lips, the lips that love you still, now tell you, you are saved!"

"*All mistook for me!* saved!" cried Courtenay, springing up to his full height, "*all*, Catherine, mavourneen, you have said '*all!*' Then does that include uncle as well as yourself?—alas! your poor murthered mother cannot see, would that she could!—and did that mysterious murmur that came on the air through my window tell the truth?"

"Yes, yes, yes, *it did*, and I am come; it is my mission here to break the happy news to you," and she fell into his arms in a paroxysm of joyful tears, and sobbed upon his breast. With one arm round her beautiful waist, and in support of her graceful figure, he stood for a moment stock still, the rigid impersonification of rapturous astonishment; then, with the disengaged hand, he parted her luxuriant tresses, and raising her tearful, happy face, he bent his neck, and impressed a long, long kiss upon her lips. He then

placed her on the edge of his bed, the only accommodating seat in that dim cell, and sat down by her side.

"Catherine," he said, "do they all *know* this? Does the chief of the police—he has ever been kind to me—does the governor of the gaol know this? Do all the town and county know it—*know* that I *am innocent*, that I am *not guilty* of the disgraceful, horrible charge?" Though his arm was still round her waist, he drew himself up a little way from her as he sat, and gazed on her for a reply.

"They *do know it*, Tom; the chief of the police and the governor brought me to your door. It was I that prayed the chief to let me bear the news to you. To you who were so noble to me on your trial; to you who would not let your counsel, even to save your life, attribute to me an unworthy act; oh, Tom, Tom, mavourneen, had they not have let me come to you as the bearer of the joy, I should have died upon the spot. The chief told me that the judge had left entirely to him the means of making you acquainted with all this, and he said he did not know a more agreeable way of doing so than through me, if I would promise him to do it with caution. Oh, Tom, Tom," she added, with one of the sweet smiles for which her features were remarkable, "'deed I've been cautious, have I not; tell me, Tom, mavourneen, have I not taken care of you and acquitted myself well?"

There was a murmured answer to this, but deeds overcame the words, if there were any, and rendered for a moment all further conversation impossible.

"Catherine 'asthore,' the dream, then, so far has come true, and to the ever-watchful power above I am most thankful, yet there is another portion of that waking of the soul which now seems to me as if it was the most beautiful part of all. It is that portion of it which made me see the happy hours of our childhood again. It surely was an intention from the same source of mighty power, not only by such a glimpse to relieve the horrors of a portion of that strange dream, but to show me that yet, even yet, the bliss of innocence can be shared in by me, by us, with all the sweet freshness of the dawn of life, if the bright being who in those hours sat in the quiet fields with me will yet bestow on me that affection which, at one time, I hoped she really felt. Catherine, mavourneen, here, in this scene of my greatest misery, a word from those dear lips can now change the gloomy place to a paradise on earth. 'Tis a strange place to ask it, but mine has been a strange weird of late, and yet I know of none in which the bliss of it could be enhanced. Catherine, mavourneen, my life, my love, will you be mine, and mine for ever?"

"*Yes,* Tom; I have ever really loved you, but at the wish of my poor mother I held off. I really liked, not even *liked* anybody else, but as she was so fond of

money that, even to save her life, she would not tell the murderers where she kept it—she, because she had taken it into her head that there was a richer suitor than you were who was after me, she persuaded me to hold you off, not to give you up, for that I never could have done, but for the cruel deception you know, to hold you off till she could discover the richer man's intentions. Richer or not, I never would have had him, but I seemed to fall in with my mother's wishes, in the hope that her wishes would come to an end of themselves."

A knock, a very prudent and good-natured knock, came to the cell-door; Tom Courtenay and Catherine still sat side by side, but *nothing more!*

"Come in," said Courtenay; and the chief of the constabulary entered.

"And I am saved, sir?" said Tom, springing up and advancing to the chief.

"You are, beyond the possibility of doubt — not simply pardoned, for there is nothing to pardon, but fully, freely, saved, without the remotest stain being left upon your character."

The chief grasped his hand, and led him to his former seat. "There, sit down, Tom, by the side of that good, kind, sensible girl, who has more feeling in her little finger than some have in their whole bodies. And here, both of you look at this, and see if you remember either of you ever to have had it in your

possession." So saying he flung an old purse upon the table for them to see.

"That purse," said Tom, "some years ago I gave to Catherine."

"Yes," Catherine cried; "that is the purse; it was in the box with the money at my poor mother's, and was taken by the murderers that night."

"That purse was found in the real murderer's pocket; he, in looks, was such an exact resemblance to Tom, that unless seen side by side anybody might be mistaken. An accomplice has turned evidence; two are now in this gaol, and the other very soon will be. You, my dear Tom Courtenay, will now only be detained till your legal dismissal comes down. Your father, mother, and brother, with your uncle and other belongings, are here. You can see anybody you like, and live like a prince, if you choose to do so; so now I have appointed you an attendant other than the usual gaolers—who do you think it is? He's outside the door, shall I call him in?"

Without waiting for a reply the kind-hearted chief went to the door, and in bolted a shambling little figure, with yellow hair, and a jolly red face that looked as if a cayenne pepper-box had been shaken on it, so freckled was it, brown and red all over.

"What, Barney McDermott?" exclaimed Courtenay, as the "Bodach buie" rushed up to him, and embraced his knees; "I know you are come to wait on me, and I accept your services with pleasure."

"*Och dhar ma chorp*, yer honour's sarvint knows whar his sarvice is more due, oh ma shaght milliu mallach orth on your hinnimies. To switch the primer, bedad, agin the truth. Mabocklish, the divils be all done, sorra a one of me knows where they ull go to, I don't begridge 'em a hot place."

"Well, now, Barney, that'll do," said the chief; "go out and wait till his honour sends for you to do his bidding."

Soon after this scene, Courtenay and Catherine remained some time together, and any little comforts that money could procure were brought to the saved man by his overjoyed parents and brother.

A few more words, and this tale of facts concludes.

Martin Cooney, the approver, made a detailed statement to the magistrates of many robberies and burglaries in the county of Mayo, in which he and Hopkins had been concerned. Three other men were apprehended on Cooney's information, and he being received as evidence, Peter Hopkins, Tom Courtenay's representative, or as Sir William Smith, the judge, termed him, the "Dromio of Syracuse," and one or two other men were transported for life. Hopkins, after his sentence, which to all intents and purposes ought to have been one of capital punishment, confessed "that as Courtenay had no part in the murder of the 'widow, he was glad that Courtenay's blood was not on his, Hopkins's, hands."

Tom Courtenay saw Hopkins before he left the gaol, and smiled scornfully at him, while he was obliged to admit that between them there was an extraordinary resemblance. Tom's mother, however, was perfectly furious at the idea of there being any resemblance, and said that "none but a complate gomeral would belave it."

The day fortnight after Courtenay's safety was declared, an order for his discharge having arrived, there was a happy party at the gaol gate. The whole parish came to give poor Tom a joyous welcome, and take him, whooping and dancing, to his honoured home once more. Cars of all descriptions came, filled with those merry faces (when they are in good humour) that Ireland can so freely show. Cars high backed, low backed, no backed, neatly painted, new or rickety and old, all rumbled in, one after another, to form a gladsome procession. Gigs, and tax carts too! There had been such brushing up of straps, oiling and stitching of harness, such rubbing of stirrups, and punching of holes, such botching of hat-crowns, that had been too much punched already, smoothing of cushions, and "grasing of whales," and application of greasy soot to "saucered" knees. "Be jingo, Pat, 'twont do to let the ould 'un's knaes be sane, t'ould divil will niver face the croud with them; he'll git redder in the nose than his knaes are white wi' blushing, if ye daunt go up the chimbly to make 'em yung again." All this hubbub had

been going on from break of morn on the day of Tom's return to the very last moment.

Now in front of the gaol they form; see that nice looking young fellow, ordering this man there, and that man here, now arranging a car in its place and pushing back a gig, while he leads to the front a tall, handsome young man, mounted on a good horse. That is that honest, uncompromising, fair-haired boy, who would not even risk the perjury of his soul to save his brother's life—that is Billy Courtenay.

Over sixty men, mounted on their country horses, led the van, riding three abreast; then came from fifteen to twenty cars and other vehicles—vehicles, because they certainly had wheels. When these had all been got into their places, and made to remain motionless, there came to the gaol door a jaunting car of far better description, the horse's head covered with evergreens, which bowed gracefully in the wind as he pawed the ground with pride, as if conscious of the part he played. He was old Ned Courtenay's horse, and a very good one too. Catherine Murphy's brother was now mounted on the box, whip in hand, while about two hundred men, women, and children on foot filed along the wall of the gaol to the right and left to follow, two abreast, in the rear.

Presently a huge monster key was heard within, fumbling in the lock, accompanied by a loud sharp shoot of bolts drawn back, and Tom Courtenay came out

on his father's arm, while on his own leaned his happy mother, smiles and tears in alternate possession of her face, leaning on the child of her life, rescued at the last moment from a broken-hearted grave.

I, as an author, wish that my readers could have heard the real Irish shout that rent the air when Tom with his parents appeared. No shouts from assembled thousands ever out-rang that cheer, the offspring of affectionate respect and love. It brought tears to the eyes of many a bystander, and sympathetic sensations of gratification. The hero and his family settled in their car, "Och bedad, didn't ould Larry McLarren jest about strike up a lively air at the head of the procession, dressed in a spick and span new suit and frippery, like a pacock in the sun, och clane showing 'em the hales of his brogues, to keep ahead of the horses." The procession had not proceeded far when some native poet, careless of the air ould Larry was playing, struck up a well-known Irish ballad, which he seemed to have added to, and which was forthwith joined in by all who could sing and all who could not.

"A dhrop of the crature will make us glad,
Too much of the crature will make us mad;
But father an' mother,
An' sister an brother,
Will all take a dhrap in their turn!

"Here's to our Courtenay, who comes home at last,
Mabocklish, mabocklish, his pains are all past;

Our jolly good praste,
And spalpeen the laste,
Will all take a dhrap in their turn !
Very fast, very fast,
Will all take a dhrap in their turn ! "

In this joyous guise the procession had to pass, on their way to Courtenay's house, the house of the late Widow Murphy. On nearing it, the piper ceased to play, the voice of song was hushed, and till the long procession, for it had been added to on the road, went by the house of mourning, nothing was heard but the tramp of horses, the roll of wheels, and the tread of man.

Courtenay looked up to a particular window of that house; the blinds were in most part down, and the shutters of the windows closed, but his quick eye looking for that which no one besides himself at that moment thought of, saw an arm with a very white hand, coming from the sleeve of a black dress, wave a welcome to him, which, small and transient as it was, was as the diamond set in gold, the richest, most precious stone, that gave him welcome to a restored, a new, and happy life. At the expiration of a *decent* time, Thomas Courtenay and Catherine Murphy were married, and for many, many years knew not another frown from the mysterious brow of Fate.

THE

TWO SISTERS OF WORCESTER AND THE SCHOOLMASTER.

THE TWO SISTERS OF WORCESTER AND THE SCHOOLMASTER.

Some years have elapsed since a family of the name of Raceman lived in the city which gives to the county of that ilk its geographical name on the map of England, and at the time to which my tale refers the parents of the family were both dead, and the only survivors left were Lucy and Mary Raceman, two girls of the respective ages of twenty-four and nineteen years, and they were the only representatives of the family. The elder sister, Lucy, was, so to speak, a fine animal; that is, she was large in frame, with dark eyes and hair, darker eyebrows, coarse features, bearing on every line a morose and sullen expression, while her younger sister was the very reverse. Of a smaller, but much more beautifully proportioned figure than that of her sister, with a head and neck put on her shoulders in the strictest outline of symmetry, every line of her countenance betokened cheerfulness, touched with a little vain feeling in regard to her own good looks, which might

suggest to the observant eye of the man of the world, a slight inclination to coquetry. Still her minutely pencilled dark and arching eyebrows, the silken hair of which pressed so closely and smoothly together that they looked as if they were painted, reigned over two dark blue eyes that seemed as though they could harbour no other feeling than innocence and love. In those days she wore her dark, long, luxuriant hair in ringlets on either side her face, and it was the prettiest thing imaginable when a wanton zephyr disarranged their position and tossed them over her eyes, to see her hold up her graceful little head to shake them back into their places. Her sister, though a fine girl, might be said to have a forbidding aspect, while Mary's sweetness and winning manners attracted a very wide circle of admirers.

These girls, left alone in the world and in possession of just enough money to maintain themselves in idleness and to keep them from useful occupation, used to go about as they pleased to any place where there was a crowd, to fairs, to country theatres, to sessions and assizes. Very well dressed, and quite up, too, in repartee and gay replies when they were accosted by the opposite sex, among their conquests they had attracted the attention of a very old man of the middle class of society, in possession of considerable wealth, and with a sort of lingering inclination for the sex he had in days long gone by so much admired in his youth. To this

old man's house, to his tea-table and to his garden these girls were ever welcome, and they did with the old gentleman and his mundane possessions almost as they pleased, so much so that the neighbours hinted to them and to each other that they should not wonder if he left them all that he possessed. The girls never seriously thought of this themselves, nor did they take any underhand means of mastering the mind of the old man. They took from his hand anything he liked to give them, made use of the funds he offered them for the hire of any carriages, drank his tea and laughed at the little loving attentions he essayed when he kissed their hands, or put his arm round their waists. He ventured on these attentions to both of them, but there could be no sort of doubt but that Mary Raceman the younger was the one he most admired.

The education of these girls, as far as reading and writing went, had not been neglected, and in these commonplace accomplishments Mary Raceman was by far the most proficient of the two, so much so that from her gentle manners and good looks she was asked to teach at a children's school in the suburbs of the city of Worcester, where she became of course acquainted with the schoolmaster, and from her teaching where he taught, she as well as her sister were very often in this man's society. As we unfortunately very often see, this voluntary teacher of the developing mind and passions of youth, cloaked under a self-asserted

appearance of sanctity and love of infants, a disposition to indulge in any atrocity that time, place, and circumstance put at his disposal; it was not long before he commenced making love to Mary Raceman, while at the same time he invariably courted her sister, so that if Mary slighted him, as he saw she was inclined from the first to do, he might through her elder relation maintain some power over her.

Now this villain, who had pitch-forked himself into this official situation of schoolmaster, had his eyes open to every turn that might bring him money or minister to his meaner passions, and having no scruples as to the way in which he might obtain an object, he at one and the same time made mental notes as to the inclinations of the pretty teacher in his school, and as to what his neighbours hinted in regard to the probability of the monied old man leaving to the one or other of these girls his fortune. His love suit to Mary did not seem to progress; his wife was alive, which was one considerable obstacle to the worth of his offers, and, what was still more against his success, Mary laughed at the mean little man's assumption, thought him only "good fun," and really in her heart detested him.

When this schoolmaster found that his chances with Mary were very forlorn or hopeless, unless he could in some way or other get a power over her which would force her to comply with his suggestions, he set about devising some plan that should give him the as-

cendency he wanted, and knowing the rumour already afloat as to the probabilities of the old gentleman leaving these girls his money, he resolved to see if he could not make that rumour serviceable to his machinations. How he succeeded the consecutive pages will in due time discover.

It was at the commencement of a parliamentary session and a London season, when the Master of Beverstone one morning was dressing, a footman came to his door with rather a hurried step, and a repeating knock, saying,

"There's a young lady below, sir, in the porters' hall, desirous of seeing you immediately."

"A young lady!" said the Master; "what does she want—what is she like? Have you ever seen her before?"

"No, sir," was the reply, "she is unknown to me; she wears a riding habit, splashed all over with mud, and she seems very tired, and says she must see you immediately on business of the utmost importance."

"Very well," rejoined the Master; "show her at once into my sitting-room, and tell her I will come to her directly."

Having made a *demi-toilette*, sufficiently smart in which to present himself, the Master of Beverstone repaired to his sitting-room so quickly that he was there just as the footman ushered in the fair incognita, whose pace in ascending the stairs of that old house had been

slow from utter weariness of mind and body. The footman withdrew as the Master advanced to meet her, and, observant of her condition, supported her at once to an arm-chair. At a glance he saw that she was both young and extremely beautiful, but so woebegone and weary that but for his arm and the arm-chair she must have sunk on the ground or have fainted away. For a moment or two she remained speechless, but then, with an effort of her pretty small hands, she undid the fastenings of her bonnet from her neck as if to give her air, and, letting it fall beside her, she sat there in all the sweetness of that very sweet face, rendered the more interesting and fascinating, inasmuch as it was but too evident that some terrible distress had almost annihilated her.

The Master of Beverstone sat for a moment without speaking, to give her time to recover her self-possession; then, taking her hand in the most gentle, kind manner, he begged her to compose herself, and when she felt able to enter into any matter, whatever it was, then to show him *why* she came and *how* he could serve her, for that in all things wherein a stranger, a soldier and a gentleman *might interfere*, he was ready to obey her wishes.

After a few moments' silence, a faint smile lit up her beautiful eyes and lips, as she said, "You have forgotten me."

"No," replied the Master, unwilling even to let

himself suppose that he could forget so lovely a face that had once been known to him. "Your features in some way or other seem familiar to me, and once seen they are not likely to be quite forgotten; but I cannot tell you who you are or where it is that I have met you."

"At the assizes at Gloucester," she replied, "when you were, as you always are, foreman of the grand jury. Do you not remember crossing the hall and nearly running over me and my sister? We almost ran against each other. You, taking it all on yourself, begged our pardon for the over-haste of the contact, and we laughed and so did you, but then you added, taking gently into your hand one of the ringlets of my hair, (it's done up now to keep it out of my way) 'It were a thousand pities by rude approach to disturb so much beauty, but you will forgive me?' We had no time to reply, for the bailiff came after you for some orders and we were separated; I have remembered the interview though you have forgotten it, and it is the cause of this my unexpected visit."

The Master of Beverstone then remembered the occasion she had alluded to, but at the same time was much at a loss to know how this could lead to the present interview, or on what business it could be that she had thus on this occasion come to see him.

"Tell me then," he exclaimed, "*whence* you have come, and *why* you are in a splashed habit, as if you had hunted all night in the vale of the Severn, and why,

so well appointed in other respects from shoulder to hand and heel, you have a bonnet on your head ?"

"I set off on horseback from the neighbourhood of Worcester," she replied, "to catch the mail to London, and a hard gallop I had for it, and my hat got so crushed against the sides of the mail-coach that when I arrived in London it was not presentable, so I went straight to the only female friend I had in town, and borrowed her bonnet."

"Well then," said the Master, "now that you have had time to rest and collect your thoughts, tell me the why and wherefore you have come all that way to see me ?"

"Because I know that you will be a friend to me and to my sister, and that you have the power to save us both."

"And what brings you, my dear girl, to that conclusion ?"

"I have thought so ever since we ran against each other at the Gloucester assizes, and you spoke so kindly to me."

"Well, a part of my question to you may be fully answered; you may know that I will be a friend to you if it is within my means to be so, but in what way have I the power to save you and your sister, and from what danger ?"

"You are foreman of the grand jury of assize before whom the charge of forgery of a will, will be made

against us, and you have influence enough to throw out the bill."

"Alas, my dear girl, there you are in error, and it is at once my duty as your friend to disabuse your mind of so strange a conception. The grand jury, foreman and all, are sworn to find a bill, or not a true bill, on the evidence adduced, and I'm sure you would not wish me to perjure myself or to do anything unbecoming my state and station. But tell me all and everything in regard to the circumstances by which you are surrounded; at all events, without in any one way derogating my position, you shall have the best advice it is in my power to afford. You have adopted me as your friend on what would seem to be rather a slight foundation for the surmise, but you shall find that in that particular you were not wrong, for I feel gratified in your trust, and in me you'll find the friend you seek, in every way in which it may be within my province and in all honour to move, but you must make a clean breast of it and tell me all—of course in the fullest confidence. A doctor cannot do justice even to his patient, unless the patient tells him everything. So speak to me freely and conceal nothing. But stay," and the Master rang the bell for some wine, and when it came he insisted that the fair stranger should drink a glass before entering into what he guessed would be a lengthened and painful discussion.

On the servant's retiring, she commenced thus:—

"My sister and myself are in a very serious scrape; it is one into which we have been led by an execrable villain," her deep bright eyes flashing fire as she said this; "and had we known at the time the magnitude of the offence we were induced to commit, we should never have listened to the artful persuasions of this base fiend for one moment. My sister and myself are left alone in the world, our parents are dead, and we have no other relatives that we know of in existence. For myself, I have been teaching at a school, at the request of some of the best families round Worcester, and this, of course, brought me in constant contact with the schoolmaster, one Robert Birchard. He is a married man, but it was not long before I found that his attentions to me were somewhat of a marked description, and that he intended those attentions to pass for making love. Oh, how I detested his advances! and had he but pressed them a very little farther I should have boxed his ears and shown him up to his betters. It would have been difficult, though, to have made the vicar and other churchmen and churchwomen believe that this Birchard was the villain I knew him to be, as he read down the parson at church, and out-responded both clerk and congregation, turning up his eyes and hiding his face longer in his hat at intervals than any man among them, for these outward and visible signs cover a multitude of sins, and are swallowed by geese as gospel. Nevertheless, had he

dared to have gone a little farther, I would have shown him up: but he changed his tactics and paid his attentions to my sister. I little thought at the time that there was a deep-laid scheme in this; but you shall hear.

"When this villain's attentions to me first began there was an old gentleman in our neighbourhood who was very fond of my sister and myself; he was always having us to tea, or to gather strawberries or other fruit in his garden; he was eighty years old, and supposed to be wealthy, and a rumour got about that he intended to leave my sister and myself all his money. He had no heirs that he acknowledged at that time, and everybody, as well as ourselves, from his great kindness and attention to us, thought that at his death there was a chance of our succeeding to his house and lands.

"After Mr. Birchard had ceased in his marked attentions to me, he used to dwell a great deal on the probable increase to our fortunes on the death of old Mr. Morgan to my sister and myself, and speak of it as almost an accomplished fact, when one day he asked us into the little room he called his study, and closing the door carefully, as if what he had to say was most important, he motioned to us to be seated, and spoke as follows:—

"'Now, my dears, I know, and everybody knows, if you don't, that I really have your interests at heart,

and I have been thinking of how we can secure the wealth of good old Mr. Morgan, in the event of his demise, to you. There can be no sort of doubt but that he wishes you to have his money, but then I know that he dislikes to make a will. He thinks that if he made a will, he should die. It is a superstitious folly that many old men fall into; so to guard against the assumptions of any next of kin that, supposing him to die intestate, *might* be brought up, there would be nothing wrong in your providing yourselves with a testamentary document, as the last will of Mr. Morgan, purporting to be signed by him, by which you could claim his property, in reality and in good faith, according to his known wishes. You see, this would only be to keep off false claimants, and to insure the wishes of your old friend their full sway.'

"'Truly, Mr. Birchard,' we said, 'it would be wrong to do so.'

"'No,' he rejoined, 'not absolutely "*wrong*," because you really would be ministering to Mr. Morgan's own designs; you would be guarding him, in fact, against the covetous assumptions of out-siders whom he never recognised; and who in all probability never really existed, and you would simply be confirming to yourselves a right in property, which, in Mr. Morgan's lifetime, he always intended should be yours.'

"With arguments such as these he caught the attention of my sister and myself; we listened, and,

so to speak, we were lost, or nearly so, for we acquiesced in his guileful suggestions, and consented to join him in anything he advised. 'Then, my dears,' he said, 'I know that both of you write a good hand; the thing I would suggest to you is to draw up a will, study and copy old Morgan's signature as closely as possible; his writing is remarkable in the formation of some letters, and very easily imitated, and in the event of his death, that will I will take care is found among his effects, you two being mentioned in it as his heirs and successors.'

"We then told him that we knew nothing about the form in which a will should be drawn up, but we might do the signatures and anything else he told us would be required; he must, however, write the document for us to copy, or we might go wrong. This he consented to do, but he stood over us when we made the copy, and then took possession of the original from which we had written.

"This having been done, he took possession of the document, telling us to leave the rest to him, and as time went on we had nearly forgotten the circumstance when old Mr. Morgan died.

"During all the time that intervened between the writing out of this supposed will, and the death of Mr. Morgan, he kept up his attentions to me, and those attentions had gradually increased, and to such an extent, that, on my strenuously and scornfully repulsing some

advances he essayed to make, he flew into an ungovernable rage, and told me I had better consent to his wishes, for if I did not he held in his hands more than the life of my sister and myself, for he would, if I persisted in my conduct towards him, prove against us, myself and my sister, the forgery of the will. Mr. Morgan died, and the will was found secreted among his effects.

"I had culpably put up with, or contemptuously endured, the advances of such a disgusting, hypocritical little villain as this, perhaps because I loathed them so that I scarcely deemed them worthy of serious notice; but when he attempted to fasten those chains around me, the forging of which his own hands had accomplished, and for so detestable and repugnant a purpose, every latent energy of my nature was roused, and I dared him to do his worst.

"The fact then is, that we are to be arraigned for forging a will at the next approaching assizes, and, unless you throw the bill out, we shall be convicted and lost for ever."

"And all this took place in and about the city of Worcester?"

"Yes, in Worcester town and county."

"Then, my dear girl, the bill will *not* come before me; it will be tried at Worcester, and not at Gloucester."

On hearing this the beautiful eyes that had still

looked to the Master for aid, fell on the cheeks, and their long lashes drooped with the weight of tears, for she still had set her heart on a power to throw out the bill, and now that hope was utterly gone.

"Do not cry, my dear girl; the fault you and your sister have committed, though a most serious one, you were led into by a scoundrel who deserves to suffer for the crime he induced you to commit. You shall not repent your trust in me. All that can be done in your defence shall be done, and I will at once write to my solicitor at Gloucester, and tell him to see that you are properly defended. With that assurance, on which you may thoroughly rely, now tell me what you are going to do; you cannot remain in this great town, all alone in your youth and beauty."

"I am going to return by this night's mail to Worcester, and the one friend who lent me this bonnet will see me off," she replied, "so I am in no danger."

"Are you sure then, that you are in no want of funds to take you back again, or to defray any expenses you have incurred? If you are, you have only to tell me, and the difficulty shall at once be obviated."

"No," she cried, "I am in ample funds for present necessities. I will now go back to my friend, and lay down at her house to rest for a short time, to prepare myself for the journey back to Worcester. Adieu, I have found you what I expected, though not in a position to aid me, according to my first fond hope.

After the trial, when perhaps myself and my sister will have escaped the revengeful machinations of this mean and detestable villain, then in happy, happier hours I will return to you and thank you from the inmost depths of a fond and grateful heart."

And then, what if the Master of Beverstone kissed the lips of this illused young and lovely girl, as he bade her adieu, it was but an offering to her beauty, and a generous, gentle assurance, that even if he never saw her again, her fate in the future was still interesting to him, and that her safety in this most grievous strait should be his all undeviating care.

Poor Mary was sadly disappointed in her expectations that she could get the charge against her and her sister thrown out by a grand jury, and grieved too, that the trial could not come on at Gloucester. She returned by the night mail to Worcester, and shortly after found herself waited on by a well-known solicitor, who put everything in train for the defence, and engaged for the two sisters one of the most competent and eloquent advocates of the day, "Mr. Phillips."

The grand jury of the Worcester assize found a true bill, and the two sisters appeared at the bar of the court to answer the charge of forgery of the will.

On their ascending to the dock the extreme youth and beauty of the younger sister, well dressed as she was, caused a general murmur or bustle of surprise throughout the court; the younger members of the bar

smiled, if they did not wink, beneath their wigs at each other, and the judge himself gazed for a moment either in surprise or pity, or perhaps in both combined, at a creature so young and fair, but under so grave a charge.

As the girls ascended to the dock, the elder one did so in a sort of morose, unmoved manner, as if she cared not what was done, but in the demeanour of the younger one there was something that at once attracted attention over and above that which was created by her youth and beauty. Her manner, while it lost none of its grace, had assumed a resolute form of mien and motion, a firmness of step and lofty bearing, and a bright, fierce, but rather roving expression, played about her eyes, as if she surveyed the court in order to fix them on some object; at last they fell on the witness-box, and then on it, though it was not yet occupied, they firmly became fixed. As she took up her assigned position the reticule which she carried on her wrist swung with some noise, as if from a hard substance within it against the side of the bar, and at that moment the counsel for the prosecution rose, and setting his wig, or going through the motion of doing so, he regarded Mary for an instant, and then said, addressing the judge, "My Lud, will your ludship have the kindness to desire that the reticule of that young lady at the bar should be examined by an officer in court? 'I have a reason for making the request."

The judge looked up in some sort of dreamy surprise

from a paper beneath his nose, which he had been examining, and leisurely replied, "Certainly, Brother Ferretum, if you have any object in the reticule, let it come to light."

An officer of the court then took the reticule from the wrist of the prisoner, as it seemed, under a good deal of reluctance on her part, and on being desired to ascertain its contents, he produced to an astonished court, and then to the considerably aroused judge, an efficient one-barrelled pocket pistol, which, on further examination, proved to be heavily loaded with powder and ball.

The buzz which followed the production of this dangerous weapon was considerable, all people, judge, counsel, jurymen, attorneys, and officials of all denominations, as well as the throng of lookers on, each and all wondering if the pistol had been designed for use in the court, and had been discharged by an unpractised hand at some one, what individuals, wigged or unwigged, male or female, might have received the erring ball. They all seemed rejoiced that the pistol had been captured.

"You have reason to be thankful, young woman," said the judge, in his severest manner, "that that dangerous weapon is no longer in your possession; for what purpose you brought it here, I do not stop to inquire—that it was for a rash one I fear there can be but little doubt. You may have been saved from a sin that

might have endangered the life of yourself as well as others. Let the trial proceed."

I will not weary my readers with the minute description of that curious trial, nor the quirps and quips and cross-questions that were put forward to mar the interests of justice or to further their success; sufficient to say, that the schoolmaster did not appear as a witness against those girls. After a most eloquent speech in favour of the accused from Mr. Phillips, and in the midst of a shout of approbation from the crowded court, instantly suppressed, as the press always has it—that is, "suppressed" after the plaudits had been given, the girls were acquitted, and received by their friends around them with all kindness and congratulation. Mr. Phillips, no bad judge of beauty, said that in all his practice he never saw such a favourable impression made in court, as was occasioned by Mary Raceman's appearance. He also said that if the schoolmaster had entered the witness-box against her sister and herself, he had not the least doubt whatever but that she would have shot him—or if she had missed him, somebody else—for with all her sweetness of expression, and apparent delicacy and refinement of manner, there was on that occasion a lurking determination about her, and a self-possessed resolution that, as against the man who had led her into this scrape, she would have had no mercy.

The Master of Beverstone then lost sight of the girls for some years, when one day, as he was seated in his

study, the servant announced "a young lady as desirous of an interview!" Of course, "Show her in," was the reply, and the servant shortly returned, ushering in a child, very forward for her age, in point of figure and manners, but certainly not more than twelve years old. The Master took her by the hand and led her to a seat, and then, looking into her very pretty and smiling face, as she threw back her veil, he asked to what he was indebted for the happiness of seeing her.

The child looked at him steadily for a moment or two, and then replied, "Mamma said you would know me from my great likeness to her."

"Yes, but my dear," returned the Master, "I may not even know your mamma's name now, she may have changed it."

"Well, mamma did not say anything about that," replied the child: "but if you were at any loss, I was to remind you of 'the trial at Worcester.'"

"Oh! I see it now," rejoined the Master; "your hair, your eyes, and the expression of your face, are those of your mamma, whose Christian name of 'Mary' I certainly know now, whatever her surname be. How is she—well and happy, I hope?"

"Yes, she is; my name is Mary too, and mamma sent me to see you, as I heard her mention you so often that I longed for an introduction, and asked her to take me to you. She wouldn't; but sent a maid with me, who is waiting at the door in a cab."

"And have you, my dearest girl, come only to see me? it is very kind of you. Has your mamma sent me no other message—is there nothing I can do for her, or for you?"

"Yes, she wishes you to give her the address of the shop in London where the Promethean Balm is made that you used to say was the nicest for the hair, and as we have a pretty garden she wants the fly lotion—it will save mamma and me, won't it, from being eaten up on our chalky soil by those dreadful little 'harvest bugs.' She thinks it was some name like 'Duncan.'"

The Master, smiling at this request, for he thought very likely it would be of more serious import, exclaimed, under some feeling of relief, "Not Duncan, but Douglas, of Bond Street! He has the Promethean balm for your hair, and a wonderful fly lotion, that deters the insects from touching you. Here, stop, my darling, I will write you his address."

The beautiful little girl then took the address, and, kissing the Master, told him she would come and see him again. She never came again, nor from that hour to this has he ever heard anything of her or of her mamma. Time, alas, has had full scope to change the mother into an old dame, and the lovely little girl into a still more handsome woman. Thus goes the world; that which is enchanting on one day fails to please on the next, the beauteous bud becomes a flower, and ere we have time to realise the fragrance that it flings upon

our senses, to steep our hearts in joy, the leaves fade and fall, and with wondering, and sometimes with tearful eyes, we ask *when anything is left, if what is left* could ever have been enchanting to our souls; and thus it is we exist to love, and loving live to lose, and yet we cling to life as the best boon under Heaven.

THE PRIEST AND THE BLACKSMITH'S SHOP,

AND

THE BANKER OF BALLYMOTE.

THE PRIEST AND THE BLACKSMITH'S SHOP.

A FRIEND of the author was staying in a north-western county of Ireland, about the year 1824, and was one day exploring the wild scenery in which the Emerald Isle so much abounds; although the winter was not particularly adapted for pleasant rural investigations, still a good hack trotted him merrily along from place to place, and enabled him to halt on any eminence whence scenery could be picturesquely obtained. One morning as my friend left Ballina, he observed that for a day in February the atmosphere was very close and warm, and, so to speak, the sky had a sullen look, as if under the influence of an approaching storm.

"I hope you'll not get rain," said his entertainer of the previous night, as he accompanied him to the door, and looked all round the horizon, "but I think you will."

"Good-bye, I hope not," was his friend's reply, as he

trotted merrily off, "but I'm well provided if it does, so I'll be all right till our next meeting." To get rid of that trite, and often much abused word 'friend,' the reader will now, perhaps, not quarrel with the word Charles.

Charles rode on for some distance through a wild and thinly populated district. The fields on either side nearest to the road had evidently been reclaimed from a red bog, for beyond the fields the bog itself, in its own natural snipe invested proclivities, stretched far into the misty world, and, save in a sportsman's view, nothing therein to be admired. Having ascended a long, gradually rising hill, the horseman pulled the rein, and looked on the vale beneath. There lay the road by which he had come, looking, where distance was great, no larger than a long white piece of tape; neither the sign of a house nor inn was there to receive any tired or hungry wayfarer. On again, the road wound about round the hill, now that way, now this, to avoid too great declivity, and then once more it assumed the semblance of narrow tape, and went on heaven only knew whither.

It was not a pleasing prospect this, for a man with nothing more than a little valise at his saddle bow, and perfectly ignorant which was the most direct road to reach the house of an acquaintance, whither he had been invited, or how far off it was. At this moment, too, large drops of rain hit him in the face, like skirmishers from an advancing force of humidity,

and by the dull leaden-like hue of the south-western horizon, he saw if not the dust, certainly the assured advance of volleys from a body of the wettest weather.

Down then came the rain, and down the hill trotted the horseman, for it was no use staring from an eminence at what was higher still, so he kept on his way till once more on a level road, on the sides of which here and there were dotted habitations betokening a trifle more of human life if not of civilisation, for the Irish pisantry even up to this, the year of 1868, cannot be set down as a civilised population, nor relieved from that oppression under which they labour, and which really is the curse of their existence and the bar to their having any "better times," the inclination to rob and murder their landlords. To tyrannise by brutal force over their betters, while at the same time their priests labour to instigate the too ignorant minds of their hearers against imaginary coercion in regard to political expression.

The priests, in fact, teach them that while they, the tenants, are to insist upon appropriating to themselves the estate of the landowner and the landlord's income, and even his life, at the same time they are to resist by any species of violence and murder the contented portion of the population, if they desire to vote at an election in the way simply advised by the landlord, or according to the free use of the franchise.

Well, through this unhappily arranged country, the

now drenched horseman rode on, till he came to a little road-side blacksmith's shop. Before him lay cross-roads for choice and a pouring storm, close to him a blackened roof and a roaring forge glowing with heated embers, around which two or three rain-drenched pisants had collected. He stopped at the door of the smithy, and the wayside Vulcan asked his honour if he would not step in. Glad at the invitation Charles dismounted, and entering the shop led in his horse, so sleek from rain that he looked as if he had been oiled all over.

The smith, having no casus belli on account of usurped land, nor enmity to a stranger, and nothing to wrench from him in point of income, wiped his saddle with his apron, and then the sounds of a fast trotting horse were heard approaching, and without any ceremony, or "by your leave," a little jolly looking priest with red cheeks and a blushing tip to his nose, stooped to the mane of his smoking cob, and rode directly into the blacksmith's shop. When in the smithy the priest dismounted, and familiarly addressing Charles, he said, "always keep your saddle dhry," and then came and stood by his side with quite the manner of a hail fellow well met.

"Heavy rain this, sir," said the priest.

"You may say that," Charles replied, rather liking the manner as well as the good-natured looks of the priest. "I did reach the shelter quite in time."

"Come far?" said the priest.

"From Ballina."

"And how far are you going in this direction?"

"To Ballymote," Charles replied, looking disconsolately at the puddles outside, in which the rain kept making large bubbles.

"Upon my word," remarked the priest, and then fell to musing for a moment or two.

The priest soon roused himself out of his reverie, and stepping to the door and out into the rain, turned himself round like a cock of the weather, east, west, north, and south, and then returned to Charles's side.

"There's not the laste taste in life of a clarance, my young friend," said the priest; "you can't get to Ballymote to-day. My little box is about four miles hence, and if you'll favour me with your presence, I'll receive you with all the delight in life, and do my best to put up you and your horse. You'll be all that way on your road to-morrow, and then I think it will be fine. I'm the Riv. Father Meighan, the parish praste of the next place."

"A thousand thanks," replied Charles; "the only drawback to the acceptance of your most hospitable offer is, that by circumstances I am forced to do so, whereas, good-will alone on my part would be the motive of my acquiescence."

"Thanks, my dear sir, for your kind expression," rejoined his reverence; "and see! there's a break in the

sky, the weather's getting better—let it but hold up a little, which it is going to do, and we'll make a start."

In about twenty minutes the weather did clear, when Charles, giving a shilling to the Irish Vulcan who had dried his saddle, priest and layman, Roman Catholic and Protestant, trotted off together.

After some conversation of an agreeable kind, and without any restraint, the two newly acquainted friends felt perfectly at home in each other's society, when at a pause in their road-way talk, the priest suddenly turned to his companion and said,—

"You're a Protestant, sir, of course?"

"Yes," replied Charles, "I'm a Protestant, but I don't see why you say 'of course.'"

"Well, no matter," replied the priest, "we shall not be the worse friends for that. I only wished to ascertain the fact. We turn to the right here, and shall soon be at home—at least I hope to induce you to believe that you *are* at home; mine is but poor accommodation, but to such as it is you are heartily welcome."

"Thanks, my good friend; I have no doubt but that you will make me feel at home, and very comfortable," said Charles. "Here's a nice place! so prettily situated among its evergreens and shrubs, and its tall plantation behind it—whose place is that?"

"Och, it's mine," said the priest, "it's where I live—I only rent it."

"I congratulate you," said Charles, "it is all so nice,

it comes on me by surprise in such a wild part of the country as this; if your rent is reasonable, Father Meighan, you're a lucky man!"

"I have it for 'a song,' as they say, though I don't sing. Put me in mind of it after dinner, and you shall know more about it, for there is a tale attached to the building of some interest. Curious facts, my dear sir, with which I myself am acquainted, and for the truth of which I can vouch. You shall have the tale when you are snug and dhry in clothes, not in your throat, after dinner. Ho! it's the part of us all (with a sly wink) to *put down* illicit whiskey."

"I should not *know* 'illicit' from 'licit' whiskey," said Charles; "and if it's good, or if the two are good, where's the 'differ?' as your Irish labourer would say. 'Twould be foolish to *seek to find it out.*"

"Here we are," exclaimed the priest, his good-humoured face beaming with hospitality, as he stooped to lift the latch of the entrance gate with the ivory crook of his whip, and so saying, and leading the way at once to the stable, a red-haired freckled-faced boy with large blue eyes, came out and took the horses. On entering the stable, two large, very clean shaped rough greyhounds came out from the warm straw beneath the manger, and yawned and stretched themselves, delighted to see their master; one of these dogs, a white one, grinned a smile of welcome to Charles, with rieved-up lips and nose, and showed such a row

of white teeth that until the fine dog put his head into Charles's hand, he scarce knew whether he was friend or foe.

"Are you fond of coursing, Captain?" asked the priest. He had suddenly taken into his head to use the military appellation.

"Well," replied Charles, "I dare say I am, though I never saw much of it."

To this his reverence made no reply, but saying "Come into the house; I'm tolerably wet, and so must you be."

Charles then followed his kind entertainer into the house, going through the kitchen, its only occupant a scrupulously clean elderly woman, who was seated knitting, but who rose and courtesied to Father Meighan.

"Nancy," said the priest, addressing her, "this gentleman is come to dine and sleep; see that he is comfortable," and thus saying, guest and entertainer went into the parlour, where, when the priest went to change his clothes, Charles amused himself with inspecting the saints, whose supposed portraits decorated the walls.

A nice, cosy little dining-room, with red curtains, and a good heat-bestowing grate, with a capital clear peat fire, which flickered its ruddy light on a table-cloth as white as snow. The dinner, nicely put on, consisted of what Father Meighan called a three-quarter hare, some

currant jelly, and excellent potatoes, not dressed in "the vulgar error of the English aristocracy," but sent up scalding hot in their own great coats, and tumbling out of their skins in mealy flour the moment they were touched with a wooden spoon. Opposite the hare was a piece of excellent corned beef and vegetables; and, said the reverend father to Charles, "Faith, you see your dinner." And a very good dinner it was, to which guest and entertainer did ample justice. Dinner over, the cloth taken away, and some oaten cakes, whiskey and hot water put on the table, with four tumblers, two a little larger than the other two, the father proceeded to mix for himself and his guest, placing the largest tumbler on the top of the other reversed, so as to catch the rising steam and return it in drops to the mixture below. On seeing that, Charles watched this manœuvre with some curiosity; the reverend gentleman, with a sly, happy smile, gently remarked, "A Protestant would have let all the best of it *go up*, where 'tis like we should never see it again; we know better here, and don't part with any such offerings; taste it now, my friend, now that the rale dhue has fallen back condensed, an' you'll forget the rain of to-day."

"Excellent," said Charles, having tasted it, and stretched his legs so as to court the full warmth of the fire; "and now, my reverend and kind friend, for the tale you promised to tell me. I am all ears and atten-

tion, and it will, though it don't need it, add a zest to your ill—I mean good whiskey."

"Och! an' is it the story, my young friend, that you're afther? Ye shall have the heads of it to-morrow morning—we'll talk of that and other things *then;* I've not had my usual sport to-day, and the dogs are fit, too, so I'm not up to the mark. To-morrow we shall be all right. Help yourself to another tumbler, and I'll give you a toast. May all illicit whiskey go down to the hearts of all honest men!"

"With all my heart, good reverend sir; you see I brew again and drink it. Hallo! your reverence, I see a pack of cards on your chimney-piece; do you play?"

"Play?" rejoined the priest, with a sly smile; "yes, of course I do, after a fashion, though I hate it. I've several ladies in these parts, old and youngish, whom I am obliged to amuse. We sit down to 'patience,' 'ecarté,' or 'cribbage,' 'beggar my neighbour,' or what not. I lose, they take my money, and then, with a sweet smile, give it back to me with a penny or two added. 'Father,' they say, 'take this, then, as *my* gift to the Church, or to be expended in masses. *Their* penny or two looks well with *my* silver; they couldn't have offered me a copper mite under any other dodge, and they score their conscience with *a gift* under rather queer circumstances."

Whiskey *ciboque gravitus*, host and guest then went comfortably to bed.

On the next morning, which was very fine, after a hearty breakfast of tea, eggs, and bacon, beautifully boiled, and piping hot, "Now then, Captain," exclaimed the priest, "what say you to a course? If a smart young gentleman like you are *can* stick yourself up for four and twenty hours with an old parish priest like me, what say you to come and see the long dogs kill a hare, and stay with me till to-morrow? Be frank with me, my young friend, and say whatever is most agreeable to yourself."

"Well, then, Father Meighan," replied Charles, "to *be* frank with you, to be your guest for another day, not driven to your hospitality by storm and rain, is really my desire."

"Now I thank you, my young friend, indeed I do," said the priest, holding Charles's hand, and cordially shaking it; "you have not only paid me a compliment to-day, but you did so yesterday. Your young stomach needs no apology from my homely viands. Here, Patsey, I know ye fed my dogs early yesterday, be sure now that they don't get anything to eat this morning before running. Have their food ready for them against they come in, with just the chill off, and no more. You have, or ought to have, some oaten cake ready baked."

"Aucht, yer riverence, there's 'lashings,' sow 'twill be all right," replied the boy.

"That's a good lad," said the priest; "ye'll be a man now afore yer mother. But be-the-bye, my young friend, how did you sleep last night?"

"Oh," replied Charles, "I slept very well; but I think your corn-beef, though excellent, sat heavy on my soul, I ate too much of it. I dreamed vividly, and thought I saw your *long white greyhound* suspended by the middle from the ceiling, hanging in mid air like the golden fleece."

"Ye saw what?" exclaimed the priest.

"Your greyhound, him you called the Don, hung up to the ceiling by the middle."

"Well, and by the holy Virgin, what did you do?"

"Oh, went to sleep and forgot it."

"You did right," replied the priest, evidently relieved from some little annoyance. "We'll ride," he continued, "as it's open ground, and if you don't see a good course, captain, you may smoder the like of me in the whiskey we are mutually bound to *put down*."

The entertainer and his guest then rode to a wide open hill-side, the priest selecting the sheltered leeward position of it to seek for a hare, and his large rough powerful greyhounds on either side, his horse prick-eared and starting at a wren if she suddenly flew out of bramble bush or heather, and making up in their own minds to give the hare as short a start as possible.

"Here she sits, and a good un—there, within two

yards of your horse's legs ; put her up," said the priest, "or the Don will chop her ere she finds her legs."

Charles, unused to find hares sitting, was eyeing the ground in vain, when his horse nearly trod on the close lying game. Off they went, greyhounds and hare, with not ten yards' law, and off went the priest after them in great excitement, and cheering on his long dogs, who were turning and wrenching the hare at once, having no run up to "blow" them. The hare, however, was a very stout and speedy one, and probably had been coursed by the priest and his greyhounds before. At last, having made a judicious turn on the brow of a hill, she evaded the fling of the dogs when they thought to catch her, the impetus of their fling and their weight sending them *down* hill far below the hare ; she then instantly made the best use of her long powerful hind legs to go up hill, and soon put a considerable space between her and her pursuers before they could recover their legs and once more make their running tell. Again on the flat ground above the hill the dogs got up to the hare, the priest cheering them on with many a shout, proving that if he didn't "sing" he could halloo, till at last, and not far from some scrubby bushes which his reverence termed the hare's home, the hare, turning short, in very great distress, flung the large white favourite greyhound, "the Don," over head and ears into a deep watery, swampy ditch, when the hare, coasting the ditch into which she

had flung her chief enemy, held her own stoutly against her single pursuer. There was "the Don," with his fore-feet out of water, clinging to the bank, and his long eager head and neck stretched in the direction of the flying hare, but, why or wherefore no one knew, he *could not* extricate his hinder legs and loins from the aqueous red mud, weed, and water which seemed to hold him as in a vice.

"Acht, blood and oons," roared his reverence, roused out of all artificial behaviour. "Ye big divil that ye are, get out of that; acht, yer'll niver see the hare again nor the like of her! Acht, it's the cobbler of mischief, the 'Leprehaun,' or the divil under water, or worse than the divil, the ould Banker himself, that has got hould of yer hinder legs, a silver candlestick to the Howly Virgin, but he's out now! Halloo, halloo, halloo! get up to her; mabochlish, good Don, he's *in* now, there's a turn! And asnillish machree, what a kill!" Saying this the good priest flung himself from his horse, rather than dismounted, and picked up the hare, which he tied in a little leather sort of valise, made for the purpose, at the crup of his saddle. "There, Captain," he cried, in joyful triumph, "I tould ye I'd show ye some sport. Let them catch their wind, and we'll kill another or two yet."

Two more courses followed, and two more hares were killed; the sensibly cunning, as well as speedy, grey-hounds *running to kill*, and *reserving* all their energies

till a bank or any sort of obstruction thwarted the hare's straight run: then, having made up *their* minds where the hare wished to go to, one or the other of them invariably got before her, and by craft and foot seldom failed to kill. The sensible way in which these constantly running dogs set about to compass the death of a hare would have totally unfitted them for public running.

As they rode home, Charles remarked, that his dream of the over-night seemed, as regarded the white dog, "the Don," to have very nearly come true. It was just as if he was hung in the water, by the middle. "But my reverend friend," he continued, "I can understand a certain author of mischief, always painted with a pitchfork, a hook-nose, horns, a cloven foot, and a forked tail, being exorcised by you, but what had a *'banker' to do* with the misfortune, or the mischief, in keeping the Don in the ditch?"

"Och! 'the Banker,' is it! you shall hear all about him, the ould miser, to-night, afther a double putting down of the illicit deed. It's a tale to tell before a good fire and something hot and strong; but such as it is you shall have it, for it is curious as well as thrue!"

The rest of the day passed very happily, and when the whiskey was put on, and the fire made up, the priest told the following tale:—

THE BANKER OF BALLYMOTE.

Well, Captain, now for the story I promised to tell you. The reason why I would not narrate it on the first night you slept here was because you were in the very room that enables me, as I told you, to rent this house, as the saying is, for an old song. The ghost of the Banker, who lived here prior to his murther, was supposed to exhibit his fleshless bones, hung up at the top post at the foot of the bedstead you sleep on, swinging by some means or other from his waist, head and arms down, and tail and legs down, something like the lamb in the golden fleece. The gentleman who had purchased this house at the time when this supernatural tale was first told, faced this ghost story like a Briton—he was an Englishman—and in order to prevent the unearthly whim of this midnight exhibition, they took the top of the bed clane away; but report said it was of no sort of use, for then the skeleton appeared hung in the same position from the ceiling. Well, the house got a bad name, and for a long time was uninhabited, till the

poor priest, myself at your service, came to reside here.

The "Banker of Ballymote" had, as you would say, risen from the ranks; that is, he was a man of low origin and very penurious in his habits, but by dint of saving every penny he could scrape together, he had amassed a considerable lot of money, which he used to lend out in small sums to poor or needy people, taking care when he did so to get a *quid pro quo* that largely reimbursed the venture; if he lost some, he gained immensely by the others. Up here away (pointing with his finger) there is a cleft between the mountains, called the "Gap." Divil a hare do I let my dogs see near it, for the sides are so rocky and precipitous that any living thing diving down, the Lord knows where, into the belly of the earth might in the fall be dashed to pieces and niver be seen again. This fissure, which complately divides the mountain, widens and closes with mighty caprice; at times but a narrow crevice, at others many yards wide, and often not opening out at all, but running, tunnel fashion, beneath the mountain. Where it opens the sides are covered with brushwood and blasted stumps of dead bleached trees. Along this wild-looking fissure there is a seldom used footpath, leading a much nearer way to several places, than by going round the base of the mountain.

Well, it was in this house, this very house, that Luke Farrell, or the "Banker of Ballymote," as he was

commonly called, resided, and if the walls that now surround us could spake, they'd have some strange things to tell as to the way he let out his money, and the usurious interest he at times forced his debtors to pay. Luke Farrell had been a schoolmaster, and bedad —he—

> "Taught so well,
> That he himself, by teaching,
> Learned to spell."

And he set considerable store too, by learning. On this account, at the instigation of his wife as well, he sent his only son, a fine grown lad of twelve years old, over the mountain to school, and the boy was doing very well.

A rum chap to look at was his father, tall and spare, and much underlimbed for his height. He always wore knee-breeches, and a blue cloth coat cut like a shooting jacket. He never had but one waistcoat, which had been black, but which by constant wear had turned to a rusty leaden hue. What stockings he had, if any, were problimatical, for he never appeared except in dark drab leggings to match the colour of his breeches.

There was something not pleasant in the banker's countenance, a narrow heavy brow overhanging very cunning and suspicious eyes, not arousing suspicious feelings in others, but it engendered an idea that *he* suspected *them*. His nose was not crooked, and yet he had high cheek bones and wide nostrils, altogether foreign to his forehead and his eyebrows. Of all the

features in his face his mouth was the most disagreeable. A malformation of the under-jaw rendered his voice unpleasant, and more particularly so to whomsoever he immediately addressed himself. His teeth too, were so closely set that he seemed to have a double row in front, so completely in the way of his tongue, as to render articulation indistinct. He was conscious of this, and had a habit of rubbing the back of his hand across his mouth while he spoke, which instead of concealing the defect, drew attention to it, and made it still more obvious.

He was good in arithmetic and writing, and a most apt and ready calculator, but when holding forth to his scholars the peculiar expression of his features and defects in utterance often caused titters and grins among the boys he taught, and caused his temper to be most irritable. When a boy came up to him without a thought of giving him personal offence, the very ticklish position in which the boy knew himself to stand often made him smile at what he knew was in the thoughts of his playmates, not at his master, when on the semblance of a smile being detected, Luke Farrell would forthwith cane the backs of the entire school, sending some of them roaring home to their mothers to look at the "welts" the cruel man had made across their shoulders.

Luke Farrell then found out, that whatever his knowledge of some figures might be, there were other

figures that would not bear the multiplication of his dots and go one, and that the best thing he could do was to leave off teaching the young idea how to shoot before every boy in the school had shot away from beneath his tree of knowledge.

On giving up his school he took to banking. By one chance or another, in addition to his own miserly care, he was possessed of a considerable sum in the bank, to which every month he added. There it lay, safe enough; he never made any use of it, he did not need it to procure him comfort nor pleasure, and the thought that pained him occasionally was, that when he died he could not kill nor take the money with him, and that eventually the boy, of whom we have previously spoken, must have it.

At last, with so much ready money at command, he resolved to amuse himself with it, while at the same time he ministered to his avaricious humour. Distressed neighbours applied to him for small loans until they could get their oats threshed, or the "pig and be good to him," would "come round." "Ach, Misther Farrell, the agent's a coming round for the rint, I'll be obliged to ye to advance me a thrifle." On these occasions, Misther Luke Farrell generally obliged them on their individual I O. U's., coupled with that of some other neighbour not so distressed, who made it a *We* O. U. He would not lend less than a pound, which under most circumstances, at the end of three months, grew

into one pound ten, and so on. He kept a meal store, also governed by the same principle, and *gave* meal to the distressed from one stone to eight upon usurious credit and good securities, and thus became widely known as "the Banker of Ballymote."

To make a long story short, there was a poor old woman to be buried who had not left a penny for that comfortable purpose behind her. She had been very popular with her equally poor neighbours, so they were setting on foot a subscription, to get her decently waked and interred.

Now, Hugh Farrell, the Banker's only son, had been promised by his father half-a-crown, if after the first year of his schooling his master gave him a good character. The character had been sent home, and its purport was that he was "the best boy in the school, in learning and in behaviour." The Banker, however, never gave the promised reward; but Hugh saw him take half-a-crown from his pocket and place it on the chimney-piece.

One day a neighbour called to beg for a subscription in aid of the funeral, and begged so hard, that Hugh went to the chimney-piece, and taking the half-crown gave it to the applicant as his share towards the required fund. The man to whom he gave it thanked him most heartily and withdrew.

"Oh, Hugh, you're a kind good boy," said his mother, "but if I had known what you were going to do with

that half-crown I would have said 'don't,' but after you had done it I hadn't the heart to take the money out of the old man's hand. I fear that ill will come of it."

"Mother," replied Hugh, "I'm sure that father intended that half-crown for the poor woman's funeral. You heard the old man say father had given nothing, so that half-crown must have been intended for that purpose. It makes little differ, for father promised *me* half-a-crown, which I was entitled to a year ago, and now he has only paid me—so let it be my half-crown; I'd rather it was so disposed of than spent on myself. He can put that half-crown agin his debt to me."

"He's not likely to do *that*, my dear boy, I fear. I'll say 'twas I that took the money, and then he won't be angry with you."

"No, mother, *you won't*. You often told me never to tell a lie! What *can* he do but beat me? I'll tell him about it the moment he asks."

"Well, my darling boy, I believe you're right, but I'm sorry I did not know what you were going to do."

It was late that afternoon when the Banker made his appearance, looking pleased and happy.

"It's a fine day," he said to his wife, "blessed be God, and everything looks well!"

"It is indeed, Luke dear," replied his wife. "It's well when we are contented and thankful for the mercies *we* have, without wishing to make them more."

The Banker was sharp and touchy, and he at once

conceived that this was an allusion to his avarice. Ugly as his smile had been his wife was sorry to see it vanish.

"You seem down, old woman, somehow, what's the matter?" the Banker exclaimed. "Cheer up, I say, everything is bright."

"Bright with us, Luke, but I was thinking of that poor creature who died this morning, and what will become of the poor little colleen, and she so young!"

"Oh, as to that," replied the Banker, "I gave a help, this morning, to bury the old one, and others will do the same, but as to the little girl, she must do, I suppose, as her mother did before her, beg through the world, and like her mother be buried at the cost of her neighbours, whenever she chooses to die."

The Banker having thus delivered himself, took a chair near the chimney-piece, and his son Hugh, well knowing the half-crown would soon be missed, kept at hand and ready to tell the truth.

"It's a hard tax on people who are neither kith nor kin to an old woman," said Luke the Banker, rising and going towards the chimney-piece, "to have to lug out their money for such a purpose. Hallo! where's the half-crown I left here this morning? Faith, I may have shoved the like of it into this crack between the wood and the wall, for I went out in a hurry. Get me the chisel and hammer, Hugh, I'll soon have it out, and a nail or two will make all right again."

"I—I took——" the mother was beginning.

"No, you didn't, I took it, father, and gave it to old Mitchell, towards Nancy Grimes's funeral."

"You young pickpocket rascal, how dare you touch it? you pilfering, stealing, young robber you." Then seizing his son by the soft part of the ear, which he pinched with all his might, "How dare you touch it, you young ruffian?"

"Oh, Luke, Luke dear!" interrupted the mother, but her husband cut her short.

"Hold your tongue, woman, do you want me to let him turn thief and pickpocket without checking him? How dare you touch it, I say?"

"Father," said the boy quietly, "I beg your pardon, if I have done wrong. I thought you put it there as your contribution to the funeral, as he told me you had given him nothing; so thinking you had forgotten it, I gave it, not supposing you would be angry."

"He—old Mitchell, lied, the old beggar. I did give him as much as I could afford, and more. You had no business to touch that half-crown. How dare you touch the money?" The Banker then seized his son by both ears and twisted them till they were as red as blood.

Hugh Farrell did not cry, but looked his father full in the face. As soon as the ear-shaking paused, "Father," he said, "you promised me half-a-crown long ago, when I went to school, if I was a good boy at the end of twelve months and learned my book well; let

that half-crown set off this one, and don't beat nor punish me any more."

"Worse and worse; a cunning attempt to get off the guilt of robbing your father. You young thief, I'll turn you out of my house, and a good riddance too. I dare say you've robbed me right and left." And he shook the poor boy by his ears again.

As soon as the shaking paused, Hugh exclaimed, but without shedding a tear, "I never took a penny from you, father, in my life."

"How do I know that? those that will rob will lie. Not another hour do you stay in my house, not another meal shall you have in it. Do you see this, you ungrateful thief? it's a five-pound note. Take it, it's the only fortune you'll ever get out of me,—begone, get out of my house, and never let me see you more. Off to the city with you, where your nimble fingers will have plenty of pockets to pilfer in; there, take it and be off with you, the worst thief in any town will teach you his trade for a few shillings," and thus saying, the Banker thrust the five-pound note into his son's hand.

"Perish the fee that would bind Hugh Farrell to disgrace!" replied the boy, as he flung the note into the fire, where its ashes went up the chimney with a comet-like tail of sparks after them, in spite of the abortive attempts of the father to save it.

This was the climax to Hugh Farrell's destiny, to burn a five-pound note! Enraged beyond measure the father

caught up a stick and struck his son right and left across the face, and other parts of his body. The boy quailed not nor cried, and his father, still more maddened by his calm humility, which he in his rage called obstinacy, seized him by the collar and flung him roughly out of the house, shut the entrance door, double locked it, and sat down in a chair.

I will not pause to narrate the conversation which took place after the Banker had bathed the temples of his wife with cold water, for she had fainted away. Suffice it to say that the mother made some impression on the father in regard to the improper violence of his conduct, so much so that he even opened and looked out of the door, in a sort of repentant wish again to see his son. "I'm not going to be the first, though," he cried, "to ask forgiveness. No, no—a night out of the house in the haggard will do him no harm," and so saying he relocked the door, and resolved to await the event of the next morning. Evening passed, and night and morning came, but though the sun shone in the heavens, the son of man in this instance came not again to his father's door. Days, weeks, months rolled on, and no tidings of the loved boy gladdened the mother's heart. Hugh Farrell, the good-looking, mild-tempered boy, was known in his home no more. His poor disconsolate mother, pitied by everyone, lingered for a year or two, drooped and died, and Luke Farrell the Banker of Ballymote, was left a lone and hated man.

There was a public-house at the cross-roads near which poor Hugh Farrell used to go to school, and on an evening in the beginning of December two brothers, named Daniel and John Costello, were sitting in an upper room, called the private room, rather scant of furniture, for there was no more in it than a long bench. On this the two brothers sat astraddle, facing each other, with a half-pint noggin of whiskey in a noseless jug, and a bell-mouthed glass between them.

"What's the matter with the Banker of late, Dan?" said John, "he'll lend no more money, and by the mass he couldn't have shut shop at a worse time for us; they say he's fretting about the boy he chucked out of doors."

"It can't be helped," replied Dan; "never mind, we *must* have it somehow, or Miky will be apt to go in the wrong ship, if he don't swing. A ten-pound-note, at the very laist, must be worked out of him somehow, the tief of an ould miser that he is."

"I doubt our getting anything out of him," said John; "he refused to advance Billy Maher three pounds, although he offered himself and his cousin Frank Kinnealy, a chap with five stacks of corn, to join him in a We O. U. He says he'll lend no more money, but get in his dues and be off to 'Merica in hopes of finding his son. His heart's clane gone about th boy, and so it ought, the ould miser, it's little matter what becomes of him."

"He won't go before March, nohow, so we've time to try it on with a We O. for fifteen pounds, and then let him think he does us, by taking ten, leaving him the five for risk. Ha! ha! it won't matter to us what our liability is, so it's straight enough. Hello! the tap's run dhry, come on and we'll ask him, the ould divil, to advance the money, and tell him that a friend of ours wants it to go to the West for fear of being sent to the East. We'll get it somehow."

On the day following this conversation, Luke Farrell was sitting in a little room of his house, at a rickety table—he was as parsimonious as to furniture as he was in regard to money—with a box of papers before him, I O. Us, and We O. Us, and all that sort of thing, when he heard footsteps as of two persons coming to the door. Shutting down the lid of his strong box and locking it, he wheeled round his chair and faced the fire, as if that had been his employment before the steps came near. Without even a by your leave, or a knock, the two Costellos entered his apartment.

Dan Costello opened the matter at once:—"Misther Farrell, we're come to you for the loan of a thrifle of money."

"You needn't then," said the Banker; "for I'll lend no more."

"Well, but to sarve a neighbour, it's what you'll do, Misther Farrell; sure of your money it's what you know you are with us?"

"I don't doubt that at all, boys," replied the Banker "but I won't lend any more. I'll never enjoy what I've got already—I *can't*."

"Why, thin, Misther Farrell, dear, just let us have this little loan for the last of it, of fifteen pounds. We're hard up, and we'll give you good security; and there, as you go out of your way to oblige us, we'll allow a thrifle more—and a good big bit more, too—over your usual charges; clane out of respect for you, for indeed we're at a great short."

The miser's ears were tickled at the "good big bit more" of profit, and he said,—"Well, and if I could be willing to break through my rule only from a wish to serve you, boys, what would you be willing to put in the We O U, and who would you get to join in it?"

"We'll put in the We O U fifteen pounds, and our neighbour, Michael Carney, will join us."

"Humph," said the miser, hesitating; and Dan Costello continued,—

"Here, John, pull the paper out of your hat."

"Not so fast, boys," interrupted the Banker; "I've paper enough of my own. The joint security will do very well; I have found him to be a punctual man, and I'll go bail you won't ask him to pay a farthing of it."

"Never, never," they replied, in one breath.

"*Mind, this is the last loan I ever lend,* so you'll *niver ask me for a farthing more.*"

"By our souls, you may be sure of that," they replied, together.

"Then," the Banker continued, "go now, boys, and fetch Michael Carney, and I'll see if I can rout out as much money as you want."

Off set the two Costellos.

"Dan," said John to his brother, when fairly out of hearing of the house, "blessed if I don't think that broath of an ould blackguard is a prophet."

"He tould some truth," replied Dan, "or I misdoubt me strangely."

Michael Carney returned with the two Costellos, and for their We O. U at three months for fifteen pounds they received ten.

In the following spring Luke Farrell sold this house and the land attached to an Englishman, to whom he gave up possession early in March; and, solitary, heart-broken, detested old miser as he was, he took a lodging at one Widow Mitchell's house till about May, by which time he thought the Costellos' We O. U, and some others, would be paid up. All his money affairs settled, he then intended to go to America, a broken-spirited suitor, to his injured and cruelly-treated son.

Never was there greater punctuality in meeting obligations to the Banker, particularly so as regarded the Costellos.

"'Twould be a pity not to give him his rights without throuble, an' he going to lave us," said one

breath of a boy, to a number of his fellows, all of them leaning over a wall by the chapel on a Sunday, waiting for prayers.

"He'll want every penny he has *where he's going*," said another.

"An' ye may say that," said the Costellos, who were of the party; "the ould chap's a going a long journey, and we wish him well out of it, with all our hearts and souls."

Vociferous as these two men were in their good wishes, there was an ironical sneer about their faces that, could the old Banker have seen it, might have made him uneasy.

About this time, one day, as Dan Costello was planting potatoes in his garden, the old Banker came up to the little gate and said he wanted a word with him.

"An' by the power of Moses," cried Dan, throwing down the log, "is that you, Misther Farrell? Welcome, welcome; won't you come in and sit down?"

"Why, then, no, Dan, I thank you; I'll just sit here a minute; I only want a word or two with you."

"Twenty words, and welcome, if you please, Misther Farrell," taking an old red cotton handkerchief out of his hat, and wiping his brow. "It's me that ought to do anything for you, if I can."

"Well, Dan, then, you see I must go into the town to-morrow, and as I have sold off everything, you know, I have no horse of my own, so maybe I thought I'd

just ask you for the loan of your beast to-morrow. I want to be there by two o'clock, and if I walk 'twill make me late home."

"My baste! Oh, death and ages, Misther Farrell, if I had twenty bastes you should have them, to be sure, and a hundred thousand welcomes."

These words came apt enough from Dan Costello; but his eyes were fixed upon the ground, and he kept drawing the first finger and thumb of his right hand from the back of his jaws to the point of his chin, making a rough gritty noise over his unshorn chin, as a man's foot would in dry weather over stubble. He changed that action to pinching up his mouth, then suddenly letting fall his hand, and looking up, "off his thoughts," as the saying is, he exclaimed,—

"And it's going to lose you, we are, Misther Farrell. Is that so? Divil a one in the townsland that wouldn't be sorry for it."

"Thank you, Dan, thank you; I'm not going to leave yet a bit. I've some business in the town to-morrow; but I'll come back, Dan—I'll *come back for certain.* Maybe I won't leave till the end of May."

"Oh, I know, Misther Farrell, you'll be going to the bank, I'll engage; and on my faith, ye're right enough; this is no place to be keeping money, except a thrifle, and you don't want much now that you don't mane to lend any more,"

"To tell you the truth, Dan, you're right; I think it

not safe to keep money—a trifle though it is that I have—in a house here, in this lonesome place."

"Indeed, an' you're right, Misther Farrell, there's no knowing what temptation it would be if 'twas known that you got paid for your house and land, and got in, besides, the most of your banking dues and your I O. Us, besides the sale of your stock and farming utensils, little sticks of furniture and what not. Why, Misther Farrell, you can't have less than hundreds of pounds in your pocket at this minute, for *it's safer in your pocket than in your house.*"

"Not so much as that, Dan; not so much. But what about the horse?"

"An' if I had an hundred horses, sure you'd be welcome to 'em all. Let's see, this is Thursday; I was for town myself on Saturday, an' I'll be putting him to the car. One day can make no differ. John and I'll be going in, you can come with us, and we'll take care of you, never fear. 'Twill be better than going your lone."

"Thank you, Dan, it will do very well if nothing else serves; I wonder—is Jemmy McGovern's horse idle?"

"Och, by the crass o' Christ, Misther Farrell, the ould spalpeen tumbled down yesterday and smashed himself to smithereens, as if he'd been a baste of crockery. His knees is tied up in male and wather; he can't move."

"Well, then, it's best to go with you and your brother on Saturday; the road's long and lonely, and it will be better to have the company of neighbours. I'll be ready for you, Dan, when you call."

"Arra blood and turf! to be sure it's better. No one but us will know you've so much money about you, an' I warrant Dan Costello's not the man to tell any one; *bidtha hurst*, Misther Luke, that's the word."

Dan Costello having thus picked out all he wanted to know, it was settled that he was to "yoke the baste" on Saturday morning, and call for the old Banker at nine o'clock.

When Dan Costello called for the Banker, he was considerably after his appointed time. Luke Farrell stood at the door anxiously waiting for him, his breeches pockets buttoned very tight, and his blue shooting-coat buttoned to its lowest button over them.

"Why, then, what kept you, Dan? I'm afraid we'll be late enough," said the Banker.

"There's a shoe loose on the mare," said Dan, "an' I sent for that fellow Marneen to drive a couple of nails in it, but bad cess to the like of him, he's away at a funeral. Come, up with you, Misther Farrell; we'll get them in at McGurk's upon the road. John's gone across the mountain, he'll be at the stile afore us."

The Banker did not relish this delay; but he got up, and away they drove.

That night, about eleven o'clock, the horse and car

were brought home by a man named Thomas McDermott, brother to the friend for whom the Costellos borrowed the money. Having put up the horse, he took the footpath across the mountain again, late though it was, and returned, in company with the two Costellos, about an hour after.

Luke Farrell, the Banker of Ballymote, did not return with them, and on the following day they set it about that he took the late coach for Dublin on his way to America.

In about ten days after this, Mr. Finley, the schoolmaster, received a letter from Mr. Luke Farrell from Liverpool, which, had there been any person in the village who had curiosity enough in him to ask as to the fact of his being off to America, would have been quite sufficient to have set the matter at rest. No doubt, then, remained upon the subject. The old broken-hearted father had gone to the United States, a "Japhet" in a search reversed.

In a former part of this tale, continued the priest, I mentioned a little orphan whom they called Cil. Cil was a bright, handsome little girl, just in her teens; she was dark and sunburnt, with a remarkably clear skin; she had beautiful teeth and raven black hair, and was what people call forward for her age. Now this girl of course knew her neighbours the Costellos very well, and one day, on meeting John Costello in a lonely place, he wanted to be free with her, but

she escaped and ran away, while he called out, loud enough to reach her ears, that "he would not let her off so easily the next time." Ever after this, Cil was dreadfully afraid of both the Costellos, and, if she could avoid it, would never be where they were.

One day, Honor Mitchell, with whom Cil lived, sent her to Michael Brennan's public-house to fetch two or three little things she wanted, when, just as she had executed her mission, and was about to leave the door, she saw the two Costellos coming up, and being afraid to meet them, she drew back for them to pass. To her dismay, however, they directed their steps to the public-house, so fearing to go out she drew back into an inner room. The men then entered and called for a half-pint of whiskey, and, sitting down to drink it, cut off all retreat, so for fear they should look into the room where she was, she crept behind the shutter of a press bed, which was open, and concealed herself, standing behind it in terror, and listening for them to go away.

There were no other people in the house drinking, and no one else near but the landlord and a boy, who, after putting down the whiskey, had gone back again into the little garden, so, to all appearance, and as they supposed, the two Costellos had the place all to themselves.

"I wonder what keeps Tom, he's behind time; look

here," said Dan, pulling out a watch, "'tis near three o'clock, and half past two was the hour."

"Augh, bother, man," replied John, "that ould turnip of his'n an't worth a pin, I often tould you to part it for a dacent one. I wouldn't keep it. Dan, mind my words, part it, or it'll get the like of you into throuble yet."

"Part it!" said Dan, "that's where I'd be a fool in earnest. It's safest with me; sure I don't put it in my pocket once a quarter, and wouldn't *now* but that 'twas *to keep the time.*"

"Well, if 'twere me," replied John, "I'd have sunk it in the lough long ago, or sent it *over the rocks afther him*, sooner than I'd have a thing to keep time agin me. Tom must soon be here now, and then, Dan, what do you mean to do?"

"To do! why to get all his papers, and what money there may be, too. He never left himself that bare as we found him, you know *he intended* to come back. We must have the papers we know are there, come what will."

"She won't give 'em up, Dan, she's as stout as a bull."

"Won't she? Athen maybe she won't, and if she doesn't, why, thin, we might send her, too, a short cut to 'Merica after Luke, eh, Jack, my boy?"

"No, Dan, you won't do any such thing——" Just as he said this the door opened, and their expected

companion came in; Cil did not recognise his voice, but the Costellos called him Tom.

"You're ahint the hour, bad luck to you, Tom," and then Dan Costello told him that on next Sunday night, as ever was to be, they intended to take the box of papers, and money too, no doubt, from Honor Mitchell's house, which the ould banker had left behind him. "Will you come, Tom, and share in the haul?"

"I don't like the job, Dan," replied Tom; "I'm for letting well alone, we've done enough already; and, if you boys will take my advice, you'll neither look after papers nor any more money. If you do, you'll see, you'll be sorry for it for the rest of life that remains to you."

"But," said Dan, "look here. If the young chap ever should come home,—he may,—why he'll be down on all what hasn't paid up. The We O. U's will give him the handle, besides, as is likely, arousing his suspicions. I'm all for the papers, boys, I know there's money hoarded along with 'em. The papers, says I, next Sunday night; come, boys, glory's the word, help yourselves, I'll stand another pint."

"No," replied Tom, "divle a drhop more do you dhrink to-day, Dan, and I tell you wanst for all to lave things as they are, or you'll be sorry."

"Not through your manes, Tom, I hope?"

"No, that's not what I mane, Dan; I'm a racl friend, or I wouldn't be here now."

"Well, Tom, give us your hand, I didn't mane nothing. If you won't come with us, we won't go," so saying he paid Mrs. Brennan for the whiskey, and the three left the public-house together.

When she told what she had heard to Honor Mitchell, that old lady waited till it was dark, when, taking the box of papers with her, and accompanied by Cil, she went straight to the house of the chief of the police, who having heard the strange story, immediately put himself in communication with several magistrates, who eventually granted a warrant for the arrest of the two Costellos. There was a large sum of money in the bank, standing in Luke Farrell's name, with a year's interest overdue, and the owner of this wealth had left no instructions as to it, and had not been to the bank, since he called previously to his supposed journey to America. About the middle of the night the chief and his constables left their station, and arrived at the village in which was situated the cottage of the Costellos. The little hamlet lay in deep and silent repose, not even the bark of a watchful cur disturbed the stillness of the hour; to feel the pervading quiet of that moment was to be reminded of the sleep of innocence; the innocent might have been asleep, but who can tell or even guess at the horrible state of unrest that *might* have held wide the watchful eyes of murder. Eyes that feared to shut, that could not close, on account of some terrible reality being pre-

sented in a dream. Through the deep silence of the fresh morning, just as a wan line of light showed itself in the east, the chief and his constables crept softly to the Costellos' door, and with a loud, sullen knock, demanded attention from the inmates.

"Who's there?" said a voice from within.

"The police!" was the startling reply; when Dan Costello immediately came down and opened the door. They were both at home, and were immediately arrested.

A most minute search of the entire premises, including the garden, was then made, but neither watch nor anything that had belonged to the missing man was discovered, and all the money that was in the house or in the pockets of the two brothers, amounted only to seventeen pence, and they were in Dan's tobacco box.

It was a beautiful morning, as the dawn came placidly on, the light step of her advance touching tenderly each purple mountain top, and soon leaving a golden tint to mark the coming day, and then the lower heaths that lay beyond, in deeper purple still, looked gay. The larks were neither soaring nor singing, for it was late in their season, and the gentle birds were chirping to each other in their grassy beds. To look on the peaceful, lovely scene, and to scent the dewy air,—for far down in the valleys the mists had only just begun retreating as the morn wore on, and

the heavy dew the fog had left brought out a thousand sweets,—to look on that scene, that quiet scene of innocence in all but man, was to wonder how man ever came to be called a Lord of the Creation! In a short time the ears of wheat, far, far below the path the police and their prisoners were taking up the mountain side, could be seen hanging their dewy heads, while between their stalks the red poppy flashed to light, contrasting beautifully with the heavenly blue of the corn-flower. What feelings there were in the guilty breasts of men, if guilt there was, I cannot describe, but probably the nervous horror of the moment stifled all but the desire to cling to life, however fallen and degraded the position yet to come. Over the mountain, and not far from the deep rent or fissure that cut the collapsed hill in twain, went the police and their prisoners, and by two o'clock that day they were brought before the magistrates for examination.

The two Costellos, who were examined separately, varied not a word in their statements, the one from the other. They drove to the town with Luke Farrell, and he left them, saying he was off to America, and should not draw out any of his money, for it would be safer in the bank than with him, when on his return with his son he should find it all to the good and be a happy man.

"Mathew Finley," the schoolmaster, then produced the letter he had received, or presumed to have

received, from Luke Farrell, on his arrival at Liverpool. The contents of the letter gave a minute description of Farrell's starting by the night coach to Dublin, when he parted with the Costellos, and of the tears shed by John Costello, when Farrell refused to return home with them. Liverpool and its shipping were described, and the one in which he intended to sail, called the "Erin-go-bragh." Many kind messages were sent to the schoolmaster, for the residents in the villages, and he was to tell all those against whom he held I O. U's that they were not to make themselves uneasy, but that he hoped to return and see that all was right, or that, when they could afford it, it would be right to the satisfaction of all parties. A more plausible or apparently straightforward letter could not have been concocted, and the schoolmaster himself, as did others of his neighbours, swore that the letter was perfectly genuine, and was to all intents and purposes in the handwriting of Luke Farrell.

Not a tittle of evidence being forthcoming to prove the guilt of the prisoners, and nothing whatever found upon their persons or on their premises to implicate them, the magistrates, much against the wish of the chief constable, who wanted a remand, decided upon freeing the Costellos from custody, and they were suffered to depart.

After these proceedings were over, the chief of the police, having retained possession of the presumed letter

from Luke Farrell, took it to his quarters and compared the writing with the undoubted documents in his box, and came to the decided conclusion, in his own mind, that the letter was a forgery, and was never written by the missing man.

One year and eight months after these occurrences, one of his constables came in to report that on the evening before a young man, of very respectable appearance, had been most inhumanly beaten, and left for dead at "The Three Roads" of "Ballymote." That the sufferer had been carried to the police barrack, and was lying there in a state of insensibility. On the chief arriving at the spot, he found the district doctor there, and that the body of a very handsome young man, apparently a stranger to all, had been washed of its blood and mud, and that there was a slight fracture of the skull, besides many other severe injuries. On his finger was a valuable ring, and the constable who made the report had been the first to find him, or if he had been seen by others, they "had passed on the other side the way."

Singular enough, the assault on this young man could not have been for the purpose of plunder, for round his neck was a silver chain attached to his watch, and sixteen pounds some odd silver in his pocket. His would-be murderers were therefore not in search of plunder, *or*, they had been disturbed in their attempt to rob him. On his person there was not a letter or

document to prove who he was, or whence he came. It was on a Thursday night that he had been left for dead, and on the following Saturday the magistrates again assembled to investigate the matter.

The magistrates' meeting was held at the Petty Sessions House of the district, about a mile from where the outrage took place, when, as usual upon such occasions, there was a considerable crowd about the door.

A policeman who was posted outside the Sessions House, to keep the gangway clear for egress and ingress, and the windows from being impeded, had several times been observed by his chief to push a young boy away from the window, who always attempted to return again with the most dogged pertinacity. The chief took an opportunity to say a few words to the constable, and the instant the boy saw his enemy thus engaged he stuck himself to his "spud" again at the window, with a pertinacity difficult to be accounted for.

The chief gave his man orders to keep his eye on the boy, and see if, or with whom, he held any communication, and in no way to interrupt him again.

Immediately opposite the Sessions House door, but at some little distance down another road, jutted out the gable end of a public-house. At the end of this house stood a tall stout young man, looking timidly, as it seemed to the chief, round the corner towards the magistrates' meeting.

This is Saturday, thought the chief to himself; he has a clean shirt on, and is evidently dressed in his Sunday suit; that is unusual, thought the chief, before Sunday is arrived. His shirt neck was open, and he had on a bran new coat and breeches, a new "Caroline hat," a pair of beautifully knit blue worsted stockings, and new pumps. Not a speck upon him from top to toe, said the observant chief to himself, and this is Saturday! Is he going to, or retiring from a dance? Or is he fresh from a wedding? He is evidently anxious and nervous about the proceedings at the Sessions, and if not going to a dance, or fresh from a wedding, he may be ready dressed to show us his heels, if implicated in the charge of violence or murder.

Thinking this over in his mind, the chief carelessly sauntered into the Sessions-room, and sent a constable, familiar with all the faces in the district, to look at the man and see if he knew him. The constable did so and reported that it was one Thomas McDermott, who lived about three miles off, at the foot of the mountain. "A brother of his, sir, I have heard say, fled the country, but I never heard a thing agin this young man."

Thomas, Tom, thought the chief to himself, that's it, and he never takes his eyes off *that* boy at the window, put there, no doubt, to catch the turn that things are taking. Now I think of it, his name is mentioned in the letter sworn to be in the handwriting

of Luke Farrell, with favour, and as a decent boy. "Here, Harvey," addressing the constable again, "send off three men to make close search in McDermott's house for anything of a suspicious nature, this instant; let them start at once; and see my orders are obeyed."

This done, and a little time having been given to gain for the officers a good start, before any alarm could arise, the chief, having given Harvey orders to follow him at a little distance, strolled slowly up the road and passed by McDermott, and then, as if looking at the weather, turned and came close up to him. When within a yard of him, the chief stopped and said,—

"Well, my man, what is your name?"

"What is my name?" he replied.

"Yes," rejoined the chief, "*that is* the question I asked; it seems you heard me well enough."

"What do *you* want to know for?" McDermott replied, evidently contemplating a start.

"Just this," said the chief, seizing him by the collar, "Thomas McDermott, you are my prisoner."

He made one desperate effort to escape, but constable Harvey was on him at once, and he was secured.

The chief, leaving his prisoner in charge of the constables, repaired to the Sessions-room, cleared the court, and reported the arrest he had made to the four justices.

It is very odd, but no magistrates ever can see beyond their nose, nor do they ever even lean to close

investigation, under any circumstances that are not as plain as that two and two make four.

"You have, I fear, been hasty in this, Mr. Chief Constable," said the chairman, "to arrest a man simply because he has on a clean shirt. I trust you may be safe in what you have done, but it seems to me to be a proceeding at great risk. I think you should have consulted the Bench before you had taken so decided a step," and the three other things, called heads, were nodded in approbation of the remarks from the chair.

"I am not the least afraid, Gentlemen, of the result; have the goodness to suspend your decision till the return of the constables, who are some time gone to search this man's house. I take on myself my official risk."

In a short time the three constables were seen coming over the hill from the search they had been sent to execute, and one of them had a considerable bundle over his shoulder, slung on the barrel of his carbine, while one of the other constables carried under his arm *three* most effective bludgeons.

When the constables came in they laid before the bench Thomas McDermott's *every day clothes* covered with fresh blood and dirt. The breast of his shirt and his waistcoat were thickly sprinkled with gore, as if it had suddenly spouted out upon them, while the cuffs and sleeves were saturated with heavy blotches, as were also the knees of his breeches. No stockings were

found, but his every day shoes were besmeared with bloody mud. To two of the sticks still adhered blood and hair, the hair exactly matching in hue and texture that on the head of the young man lying at the point of death.

The opinion of the Bench then changed as to the wisdom of the arrest, and thinking it best not to ask the prisoner any questions, they committed him at once to the Assizes.

For days the young man lay between life and death, unable to speak, and in a perfectly unconscious state, when one morning an express came to the chief constable, from the governor of the gaol, to say that Thomas McDermott wished to see him, with a view, the governor thought, of making some revelations.

It is too long to narrate to you, captain, continued the priest, all the minute confession made by this fellow of the clane shirt, claner a good deal than his conscience. But he was with the two Costellos in the first instance when they murthered the old Banker, to whom this house once belonged, having induced him to dhrink upon the road till he didn't know well what he was about. Latterly, to drown the remorse that haunted his heart as to his conduct to his son, he would drink, the ould miser, at anybody's expense but his own, and by so doing, the Costellos made him too late for the bank.

McDermott had been told by the Costellos, who were bringing the old Banker home by night, then consider-

ably the worse for whiskey, to take their horse and cart home, and they would walk over the mountain path the shortest way, with their victim, when, having put up the horse, McDermott was to meet them on foot as they came over the mountain. When McDermott reached the top of the mountain, he heard the Costellos some distance below on the footpath, and by that time the night was light, and when they were about twenty perches from him he distinctly saw, as well as heard the blow that one of the Costellos fetched Luke Farrell over the head with a heavy bludgeon. Farrell at once fell from the blow, and then both the Costellos hammered his head with their sticks, till Dan said, "That'll do. He's done, be quick now."

The Costellos then knelt down and rifled his pockets. As soon as they had quickly accomplished this, one of the Costellos, the first who stood up, said, "Come, in with him," and then they dragged him a short distance to the edge of the chasm that divides the mountain, and flung him over the precipice. The dead, heavy fall of the body could be heard two or three times sounding up as it came in contact with stump of decayed tree, or the granite corners of the projecting rocks, when suddenly the noise of its fall ceased entirely, and McDermott thought it must have reached the bottom. As soon as McDermott had seen this he got frightened, and before the Costellos saw him he ran back to the village as hard as his legs could carry him. After a little

time he returned towards the mountain again, and met the Costellos a little way from home. They asked McDermott what kept him, and he replied he couldn't find the key of the stable for a long time, and he didn't like to lave the mare in the street. They said he was right, for it would have looked odd, and Dan added, "You didn t mate the ould miser a going home, did you?" On this John Costello laughed and said, he'd be an ugly customer to meet now, for any as was afeard of ghosts. They then said he was gone to 'Merica, and McDermott replied, "by the short cut, eh boys?" when Dan replied, "you may swear it, Tom; but bidh a hurst, we've your share here, so come along." They robbed the body of eighty-four pounds and some silver, and the watch. McDermott got twenty pounds for his share in the transaction,

The Costellos were greatly frightened when they were arrested and their premises searched, but when they were discharged, they thought all was over, and were bolder than ever. We could not think why Honor Mitchell, with the Colleen Cil, left her house so suddenly. The Costellos were to have taken Farrell's box from her house the night after she left it, but the ould lady was beforehand wid 'em. Dan Costello got Frank Larrigan of Cornashea, to write the letter, and gave it to a man named James Casey to post at Liverpool on his way to 'Merica. Frank Larrigan had been well edicated and was a dab at forgeries.

It seemed then, that on the Thursday previous to these events, he was at the Costellos, when they all three saw a handsome well dressed young man walk up through the village. The stranger went direct to Honor Mitchell's without asking his way, and thence on to Luke Farrell's, but *they were none of them there.* He then returned to Honor Mitchell's, and entered her house. All the people in the village were peeping at him, and a report ran everywhere like wildfire that it *must* be young Hugh Farrell come back. The stranger soon came out of the house again much excited, when he was heard to swear something about law and justice. Dan Costello then sent a small boy after him, (from the time they're born the small gossoons are taught to spy and dog the heels of anybody,) to watch the stranger and see where he went to, or what he did. The boy followed his steps to Brennan's public-house, and from a corner of the public room heard every inquiry he made.

He stoutly repudiated the rumour that his father had gone to America, or that he was the author of the letter received and sworn to by the schoolmaster. He also said he would start off that very night to ascertain the truth, and that he was not quite the fool some persons seemed to suppose.

On hearing this, the boy stole away from the public-house; he was just about a sharp 'un, and told us every word he had heard. On hearing this, "Boys," said

Dan Costello, "by the Crass o' Christ, we've no time to lose; that there is young Hugh Farrell sure enough, and he'll work us harm if we don't send him after his father. As good be hanged for a cow as a goat, if 'tis to be. The night will be dark, and we must be at the cross roads before him, there's nothing else for it." The Costellos and McDermott went together, for the latter said he was sworn to assist his brothers at their bidding. May be, (said the priest,) it was one of their illegal oaths, or 'twas a lie to shield himself, but to the cross roads they all three went, and there the body of poor "Hugh Farrell" was found lying for dead by the constable. Now came the folly of the Bench of Injustices, acht, be the powers, our magistrates are the most impartial owls in existence, for they commit themselves quite as often or more so than they commit malefactors.

Of course on this evidence from an approver they issued a warrant for the two Costellos, and the chief of the constabulary set off and searched their house for them, and overran the whole country side, to try and effect their capture, but, thanks to the "impartial" magistrates, the birds had flown, and were clane off to America. The moment they heard of the arrest of McDermott they construed it into a signal to fly. Had the suggestion of a remand been complied with, two of the foulest murderers that ever stained the annals of crime, would have been brought to justice.

Then came the search for the body of the ould Banker. It was a bright sunny morning when the police reached the fissure or chasm in the mountain. The air was clear and bright, that the constables left, when they cautiously crept into the dark fissure, and then when once in, light at times left them, at others it came again down on them, bright and joyous, where rocky cavern broke out again beneath the sky.

In the dark places they had lanterns, but there they did not expect to find what they sought, as the body must have fallen from an opening above, so they kept on through the chasm as far as they could go without finding anything. They looked on the floor of the fissure, and among the great boldre stones and detached pieces of rock that had fallen from above, but nothing of the body could be seen. At last one of the constables called out, "Here's a piece of an old blue coat with buttons on it, stuck in between these large stones;" then looking up at the precipice above, he uttered an irrepressible cry of horror of, "*there* he is!"

On the chief and the other constables running to him, and looking in the direction to which he pointed, they saw the skeleton of a man suspended on what had been the stomach, in the cleft of a blasted ash tree, withered to the whiteness of the bones themselves. Across the shoulders, and in rags upon the arms, a portion of the old blue shooting cut jacket still

adhered, everything else had fallen away except the pumps, which still held on to the fleshless feet.

"Acht, by the holy crass," exclaimed another constable on coming up, "that's the ould Banker that we look for; see at the ramshackled jaw on him, and the onaven teeth, bedad I'd swear to him amongst a million."

There then hung that hideous spectacle in a position like the golden fleece; the grinning head, and the sightless orbs, and outstretched arms, looking down on the police as if demanding aid, and the legs swinging on the other side the stump of the tree, just as they were caught on the night of the murder.

At that moment the mid-day sun reached its highest altitude, and a beam from the glorious, joyful light of day fell on the bones, and glittered on their weather-polished surface, as blithely and as brightly as on the spar of the mountain above, or as it would have done on the sweet pebbles of the running river, or the innocent face of a child! The raven, and the carrion crow, and twenty long months of summer heat and winter frost, had done their office on those miserable remains, and for *that* end the living tenant of that ghastly case had spent a life in making and in hoarding money, loving his worldly dross far more than his little son, and making the helpmate of his home unhappy.

While this event was passing, a constable, detached for that special purpose, started to Liverpool and ascer-

tained beyond a doubt that the two Costellos had sailed on board a vessel called "The Two Brothers," entering their names as Dan and John Costigan.

Well, shortly after this there appeared in the Dublin papers the following paragraph :—

"Total loss of the ship 'Brothers,' upon the coast of Wexford. Dreadful loss of life. The 'Brothers' was bound from Liverpool to New York, with a valuable cargo, and a number of emigrants on board."

Among the lost was the name of John Costigan, and among those saved his brother, Daniel Costigan. The vessel was a total wreck, the few survivors in a miserable state of destitution, some of them with scarce a rag to cover them. The surrounding people however were very kind, seeing them taken care of till their friends could send them assistance. The wounds and bruises from the rocks on some of them were very severe, but medical attendance had been procured.

On reading this paragraph two constables were instantly despatched to the scene of the disaster, and on the sixth day they returned with Dan Costello in their custody.

Time and events, from the inscrutable will of Providence, seemed to have closed around the doomed man, when all human means had failed to effect his capture and punishment, and it now seemed to this unmitigated villain, that he could stretch out his hand and touch the last moment of his existence.

Day by day the assize approached, and when the hardened culprit knew that he was to be summoned from his cell, he debated within himself, whether or no he should make a clean breast as it is called, by making a confession as to things already proved, or, as he termed it to himself, "meet his fate like a man."

Arraigned at the felon's dock, when asked if he pleaded guilty or not guilty, he put on a semblance of insanity, whether real or false the first portion of his rhapsody no one knew, but there cannot be a doubt but that he lied in what he said, as to his hand having been bitten by the murdered man, and as to the fearful struggle that had taken place. If he did *not* speak falsely, then the approver was false, as to the method of the murder, for he had stated that there was "no struggle," that the victim "was drunk," that there was "no noise," and that Farrell was instantaneously felled by a bludgeon and deprived of life. However the judge gave him the benefit of temporary insanity *then*, whether feigned or not, and ordered him into the hospital of the gaol, where *a* fever *did* certainly come on him and he died before the next assize, thus *in the end evading the fate* that a just Providence as well as the efforts of offended man *seemed* to have designed as a punishment for as atrocious a villain as ever existed.

Poor young Hugh Farrell lay for some time 'twixt life and death, with Honor Mitchell and her dark handsome little girl, Cil, as his nurses. At last youth and

its strength came to the rescue, and through attentive nursing and a stubborn constitutional struggle against death, his recovery was no longer doubtful. The will of his father had been found in the box containing the papers, which left everything to him, including a considerable sum, which, unknown to everybody, he had invested in the Bank of England. Hugh Farrell was therefore very well off for the remainder of his days, a gentleman at large, to settle wheresoever he pleased.

On a lovely afternoon in the summer following these events, as he was seated in an easy-chair in the neat little garden of the lodging to which he had removed, still weak from his late severe illness, Cil came in at the little gate with a beautiful moss-rose in her hand, a blush shining through the clear skin of her dark cheek as she fastened the flower in his bosom.

"Cil," he said, "do you love me?"

"Oh, Master Hugh, you mustn't spake of that to me," she said, a smile parting her rosy lips and showing the whitest teeth in the world.

"Yes I may speak of it, Cil, for I mean you and everybody to hear it. You have by your gentle nursing saved my life, and to you, sweet darling, the rest of that life is due!"

And then by a mutual kiss, a compact was sealed that waited but the lawful sanction of the priest.

"Now, Captain," said the jolly priest, "put down the

whiskey again to wash out the terrible, and to turn it into a good night's rest. I don't mind telling you, now that the hours of night are nearly done, that the room you sleep in is said to be haunted by the old ghost of the Banker. He appears, or his skeleton comes without him, hung up by the middle like the golden fleece to the centre of the ceiling, and thence the skull seems to look with its orbless eyes round the room; the bones swing slowly till the skull seems to yawn on whoever occupies the bed."

"Strange!" replied his guest with a shudder, "but my dream was that I saw your great long white dog there, the Don, but I went to sleep again, and thought no more of it."

"Well," replied the priest, "I never saw the ghost myself, he'd be afraid to show himself to me, knowing that my calling is with spirits, not with bones; och, captain, don't laugh, I don't mane that (pointing to the bottle, now with very little in it). Dog nor divil shan't disturb you this blessed night; I must be up before daylight in my calling, so I'll carry up this little drap of the comforter into your room, an' if ye don't mind a little smoke, I'll have my pipe in your arm-chair while you go to sleep—that is, if you don't object."

"Not in the least," said the captain, with the remembrance of what he took for the Don on the ceiling the night before; "sit and smoke in my room and welcome."

This arranged the captain went to bed, the priest soon came in, stirred the fire in the little fireplace, put some more peat on, lit his pipe, and composed himself in the chair. The captain fell asleep, tired with his coursing on the previous day, but had not slept long when he awoke with a start. Perhaps it was the flittering of the priest's candle in the socket as it went out that aroused him, but be that as it may, just as he opened his eyes before the last flash of the candle expired, he saw a long white something or other dangling from the ceiling and apparently swinging slowly round. He saw too, the figure of his entertainer, the priest, turn in his chair, and pointing upwards with the small end of his pipe, the candle then left them in total darkness, and the clock below in the kitchen struck one.

"There's the long dog again," exclaimed the captain from the bed addressing his voice towards the fireplace where he knew the priest was sitting.

"'Twas not the dog," replied the priest's voice, "'twas what has no business there. Och, but we're both of us draming. I'll grope my way out and get a light."

"Are you coming back, my good friend?" exclaimed the captain, in some little trepidation.

"'Deed I am," replied the priest, "in the twinkling of my modther's eye, so be asy where you are. Dog or no dog, I'll send that customer to his kennel, or I'm no good servant of the Pope."

The priest soon returned with a lighted candle, when

as the welcome light broke into the chamber the captain's eyes were set on the ceiling, but nothing remained there, and it being nearly time for some duty that the priest said he must do, the host left his guest to further slumbers, and the captain slept like a top till time to get up for his breakfast.

When the captain, as the priest *would* call him, came down to breakfast, his entertainer met him in his usual hearty good-humoured manner.

"Ye didn't see the thing again," said the priest, "I take it, it's done down, for it niver came before me afore, it didn't expect me then. Be my faith, though, 'twon't do to lay the ould Banker out entirely, for though he's done with the gould of the world, he's, or the report of him is, as good as the best of his dirty money to me, for it's that that gets me this house for an 'ould song.'"

"There's my horse at the door," replied the captain, "loaded behind and before, what's he got at the croup of the saddle?"

"Oh, my good friend just the last brace of hares we kilt, in spite of banker, leprehaun, or divle. The white long dog, the 'Don' in his *rael self* gives them to you, say no more, you *must* have them. Then, God bless you, Heaven speed you on your way and may the Holy Virgin keep you from mischief. Protestant as ye are, ye won't be angry with a poor priest for giving you his blessing, for though bigotry, uncharitableness, and

doctrines of Rome—och, bedad where am I floundering to, I'll get into mischief if I don't look out—but don't mind. I've been as happy as a gossoon in a gooseberry bush in your society, an' if iver ye come this way again, don't forget the ould priest at the foot of the mountain, and come and help me to put down the illicit still."

LONDON AND LOUGH NEAGH.

LONDON AND LOUGH NEAGH.

More than a quarter of a century ago, now that the year 1869 has come, two friends met in Pall Mall, in the early part of July, and on a very hot day. At the era to which this tale refers, among the "swells" of the period it was the fashion to say that *the* signal for leaving London was the fact; when Hackney coachmen began to sit on the boxes of their old rumble-tumbles, in their shirt sleeves, and to ruralise their stomachs by eating cherries, and spitting the stones upon the pavement, to the manifest probability of surgical practice. Important signs of the times those were, to guide the duration of Parliament and the London season.

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed the elder of the two friends, to the taller and younger man, whose hand he had taken; "why, my dear Bill, you are just the man I want. What are you going to do to-morrow?"

"To-morrow," replied his friend, "to-morrow, let's see —oh! to-morrow's Sunday; going to church, of course."

"No, I'll be hanged if you are," rejoined his companion; "I know better or worser, perhaps, than that; which is it?"

"Well, if you won't believe *that* good of me, then take the worst," said Bill, "I shall go to-morrow to the Zoological Gardens, in the Regent's Park, to stare at the apes, and imitate the monkeys by making love."

"Making love! to whom?" inquired his friend; "any great catch going there?"

"No," replied Bill, "none that I am aware of, they're deuced scarce now, so I shall recreate myself zoologically, and, lion-like, lie down at the feet of the prettiest lamb *that* 'garden' may, for the time contain."

"Now, my boy, you'll do *no such thing*," rejoined his friend; "listen to your better angel, albeit, he is not of the softer sex! You can serve me, and if you play your cards well, yourself at the same time, on the blessed day that is approaching.

"Louisa and myself are going down to a quiet inn, to-morrow, to dine, walk about and ruralise, all most charming things to do, if we were alone; but attached to us is a lump of a girl with no end of money, and nothing will make her *see* that we do not want her society; she has invited herself, and won't hear of its being a stupid thing to do, so you *must* be of our party, take her off our hands, and make yourself a man of money by so ingratiating your comeliness in that

short time, as to cut out all the other aspirants to her golden hand."

"Oh, but," Bill began, "I dare say! she may be as ugly as virtue, sin I mean, and I don't seem to see it."

"See it you must, you can't leave us three together —three people in the country on a sweet summer's afternoon, helplessly left together, are done for. That number embitters fruits, withers flowers, taints even the freshest country air, spoils wine and induces thunder, so you can't, as a humane man, refuse to aid me in so great a stress. So then, my boy, you'll come, and take Miss Chillybun off our hands."

"Miss *what?*" exclaimed Bill.

"Miss Chillybun, she's ten thousand a year in her own right the day she marries, and lots of expectations besides, loads of jewels, nice horses, and is quite good-looking enough for any wife. So, you ungrateful dog, say you'll come to my house at two to-morrow, there is just the vacant seat in my carriage; you'll have a golden opportunity, all alone and your own way, and have cause, if you succeed, to bless me all the days of your jolly life."

"Very well, then," replied Bill, "I'll be with you at two, so my sacrifice on the gilded altar reeks complacently in *your* nose at least—a victim dies to serve you, and he'll not fail."

Now it so happened that the hero of this tale liked to have his own way as much as any soul in existence;

in many respects he was gifted with a power to please almost any one in whose good graces he desired to ascend. He was good-looking, gracefully athletic, accomplished, brave and gentle, but as yet he had no money, or in other words, he was in a worse position than that of having "no money," for he *had* a *little*, and having *that little*, people expected him to pay his debts. It is a fact, though a very strange one, men with "nothing," keep race horses and play for large sums at whist, and never seem to be in any sort of embarrassment, while the young man supposed to have a "comfortable competency" never knows what freedom from duns is, is for ever in difficulty, and leads an unhappy life of thraldom. Bill thought of all this, and when he retired to bed after the opera, he dreamed with his eyes open of countless riches, stables of hunters, forests in Scotland, salmon rivers, and that "honey drop," a pleasing wife. Then a change came over his eyes, and his dream too; he closed the former, and seemed to shut into himself the awful phantasmagoria of a housekeeperish-looking, fattish, frowning woman, and fourteen babes all going down one way and coming up the other; a matrimonial staircase of pledges, kicking, cuffing, squalling, and crying, all of whom, in one furious struggle, he kept trying to stuff back again into what seemed to be an enormous quiver. His wife, and all the world called him for this "a heartless and ungrateful brute," and kept pulling the strings of the

quiver towards greater fecundity. Dreams do not last for ever; when just as he had got rid of one night-wife or mare, whichever the reader likes it to be, his servant aroused him out of a deep, sweet sleep, and told him "it was time to dress."

Bill could have sung for joy, when he found that he was still his own master, and with the bright morning sun came the joyousness of youth, and his chance to win a fortune seemed to borrow rays from the great god of light. "Marriages are made *in* Heaven—humph," said Bill to himself in a sort of soliloquy, "what for? for our punishment perhaps; but then they say again, there are '*no* marriages *in* Heaven,' that may account for angels being so happy! What if a man marries three wives, and they all die and go to Heaven—how is he off when they meet, supposing he goes there also? It's not for me to say," said Bill, stepping out of his bath and seizing a rough towel; "what is beyond all human comprehension, had better be left to its own abstruse position; he only stumbles who walks with a bandage on his eyes, so now to breakfast, and then to see what Miss Chillytum or Chillybun is made of. Hang me if ever I shall get her appellation correctly; I'll make a dash at her Christian name, and hope it may be pretty."

Having made a hearty breakfast, Bill set off to join his friend, resolved to tilt for a fortune, and, if he failed in his "attaint," to pocket his discomfiture instead

of money, and to go on as usual, if anything, more merrily, in having escaped the altar, or halter, which you like, and being left to himself again.

On arriving at his friend's house, he gave his name to a figure footman, who repeated it to another, who, seeing the groom of the chambers on the stairs, tossed it up to him with considerable variations, who then announced his approach, but under such an incomprehensible appellation that, on entering the drawing-room, Bill found his friend and the two ladies seated and coldly staring at the door in wonder as to what brought them a never-before-heard-of guest.

The mystery, two mysteries, were soon dispelled, for in addition to his own personal appearance, though at the tail of a strange name, Bill found himself *vis-à-vis* with the heiress, a nice good-looking, good-natured, girl, and with a sigh, he thought to himself he was done for, for with a fortune she was handsome enough for anything.

In the days to which this tale refers, there were many good old-fashioned inns—they were not then called "hotels"—not far away from London, often sought on a Sunday, and which, with their neatly kept gardens, flowery borders, and green lawns, were a delightful change from the soot-begrimed streets of London. In less than two hours the wheels of the carriage rattled on the stones before the portal of the inn, the smart postboys pulled up with a flourish, a parrot, hung in

his cage at the entrance, screamed "door;" "door, door," was echoed loudly from the remoter offices of the building, the yard-bell rang, and innkeeper, waiter, chambermaid, ostler, relays of boys in boots and spurs, and boots himself, all came around the descending guests, and ushered them into a detached portion of the inn, where rooms had been previously prepared for their reception.

Bill and his friends had had time to stroll round the garden, and to get lost *in pairs*—for somehow or other they never took the same turn on the gravel walk. He had selected the sweetest flower, and seen it placed in the fair and rich bosom of his companion, and she had selected one for him in return, and with her own white hand fixed it in the button-hole of his coat, so that he thought he was getting on, and there being a pretty rock arbour near, with a seat on which there was just room enough for two, Bill suggested a temporary rest, and they sat down together. Here, then, was opportunity No. 1, for a few diffidently murmured sweet words, and Bill was about to assert his full coincidence with Byron, that, "Man was *not* formed to live alone," when round the verge of some clustered rose trees, there came the waiter of the inn, dressed like a gentleman for a ball, no hat on—a waiter never was seen in a hat, I don't think they possess such a thing—and by the white napkin fastened on his thumb, but waving in the summer air, the prophetic eye of appetite

assured them that the intruder impersonated a herald from the kitchen ; no doubt was left on the subject, for the man exclaimed, "If you please, sir, dinner's on the table, Sir John is there, a-waiting for you."

Bill and the heiress, now in his own mind his intended, joined their friends; the repast was excellent, —all was good ; table linen like snow, champagne iced to the greatest nicety, water *souchè*, plates and dishes hot, young potatoes, lamb, and mint-sauce delicious, and a duck and green peas perfection, and then the young apricot tart! Well, if the way to an Englishman's heart *is* down his throat," as some cynics say that it is, whether that be the road to it or not, Bill's heart was touched, and he really found that by the time dinner was over he was, or thought he was, over head and ears in love. Everything seemed to favour him. Topics of conversation were mooted in which he was well-versed; his friends listened, and what was more to the purpose Miss Chillybun seemed enchanted with his graceful wit and humour, and drank in every word he said. Nay, when the flower she had given him got a little displaced, with her own fair hand she took it out to readjust its position, and as she did so she lifted it to her lips to inhale its perfume ere she restored it to his breast, when, it might have been accident, but, "by Jove," Bill thought to himself, "I saw her lips give it the tiniest kiss imaginable." Oh, so champagned and sunny, elated and happy, did the mind of our young

hero become, that I believe if Satan himself had donned a petticoat and sat down by his side, hiding his tail, he would have sworn the demon fair, and nothing near the complexion of his fame.

Dinner over, Louisa and Sir John strolled forth into the garden, coffee ordered against their return, and here then Bill found himself in opportunity number two. He was not over bold in love affairs, or by nature prone to arrogant assumption, and his pride would have been hurt at a repulse from woman; but on this occasion wine, warm weather, evident success in powers to please, and gracious and approving smiles, had so elated him and braced his nerves that he resolved to win or lose by the action of the hour. At once he plunged into love and its effects, its sunshine and its sorrows. Miss Chillybun laughed at the idea of a broken heart, when, seizing on that first step on the already upreared ladder, Bill asked with a sigh, "If she really deemed such infraction *impossible?*"

She sighed and looked down and he proceeded.

"They say"—who "they" are that say this, I never knew—"that love at first sight is idle, that a sudden predilection for a girl is a species of insanity, a vision, or mental or momentary structure without foundation, not worthy to be dignified with the name of love; but my darling creature," (he was warming up,) "I don't agree with them. A first sensation is ever true, an impulse of nature arising from the heart unalloyed by

worldly considerations, and trammelled not by the cool dictates of reason or the sordid sensuality of the world. For me," continued Bill, taking the unresisting hand which rested near his on the sofa, "it has lines of enchantment beyond the powers of speech. My dearest darling, please——" Alas, alas! what he was about to add, faithful historian as I am, I know not, for at that moment the door of the room opened and a man's head, with lanky brown hair, and spectacled nose, was thrust in, whose assisted optics seemed to fix themselves on Charles's light paletot lying on a chair at the further end of the room.

"Beg pardon," exclaimed the intrusive head, ushering in the attached body, "but I left my coat," and he advanced to seize it, as he supposed, when Bill, in a fury, exclaimed,—

"Hold, sir! don't touch that, it's mine."

"Beg pardon," again replied the intruder, in some confusion, and so saying he retired without further remark.

Sir John, Louisa, and the waiter with coffee, all then came in together, and Bill felt distressed and humbled. Sad to think that at such a moment, fraught, perhaps, with his future destiny, when his tongue was brave in eloquence, and a pretty little ear (she had very pretty ears) inclined so charmingly to listen, that a beast of a goggle-eyed man should bolt in upon and break his *tête-à-tête* in a blind plunge after a garment that did not

belong to him. Fever heat was down, Bill and his heroine were alike depressed, and during coffee they hardly exchanged a word.

Coffee is an excellent restorative though, and when their cups were finished, the sun in cloudless splendour being about to set, the friends sallied forth together, Bill being, or thinking himself, really in love, and the more so because he had now ascertained that the supposed loved one's Christian name was "Georgie." There *is* a good deal *in* a name we all of us know, and that name had immense favour in our hero's ears. Sir John and Louisa went first, and Bill and Georgie followed at a considerate distance, not near enough to hear what their friends said. Arrived at a little stream that crossed their path, Bill and his love tarried to look at a shoal of gudgeons. That, of course, accidental pause, still more widened the distance at which their friends were, and Bill and Georgie had at least command of the situation thus again placed at their disposal. The birds were warbling their evening song, the wood pigeon in an adjacent park seemed with his soft rich note to be singing nature to sleep, while the moor-hens in some broad ornamental water uttered their short comfortable cry as if rejoicing over the safety of their nests. Around Bill and his heroine there was, at that moment, a dewy, dreamy stillness—a calm sensation of peace and rest, which appeared the effect of magic, considering that in less than two

hours, railways all unknown, that quiet spot could be changed for the noise and blaze of a full opera.

They walked on in the direction in which their friends had proceeded, but who were now quite out of sight, and as they came to some thick alders by the side of the placid stream, Bill took Georgie's hand to stay her while he pointed to some beautiful white water lilies growing close to the bank. She did not withdraw her hand, and hand in hand, and then some how or other, holding her hand in his left, his right arm encircled her waist, of course, to prevent her falling into the water, and in that position he began again to lead up to love, in glowing and suggestive terms of passion at first sight raised. Georgie was silent; but she sighed, and her head inclined to Bill's shoulder. "My darling," he passionately exclaimed, advancing his lips to hers, "then will you be——" Here, alas! a sudden rush from the thick alders close beneath them took place. A figure rose with startling effect, a man, who must have heard every word of their conversation, rushed off in the direction of the inn, and Bill recognised, despite the twilight, the very same straight-haired, spectacle-nosed young man, who had, in a previous instance, frustrated his *tête-à-tête* when in search of a great coat. At the very moment that the thread of his discourse had thus again been reft, Sir John and Louisa came back and joined them, saying "it was time to order the carriage."

They walked back to the inn; Bill tried to loiter on the way, but his attempts to loiter or converse were vain. Champagne and eloquence, whether caused by the wine or not, alike left him in the lurch, and even Georgie herself did not seem to do anything in aid of the resumption of soft ideas. Sir John also kept speaking to them, no doubt thinking that, if there had been an inclination to make love, time had been plenty and opportunities not wanting, and therefore in that respect he need be at no further care.

Alas! how little people know how much hangs by a thread, or how much will hang by it, not only in love affairs, but in other respects as regards the mundane fate of man. The most harmonious passages in music may be marred by one false note, and though to those in love opportunities of speech in supposed privacy may be given, yet a malicious little Puck standing on indented moss, with his arms akimbo, as in Landseer's picture of "Midsummer Night's Dream," may be bent on mischief, and conjure forth a thousand *Monsieur de Trops* or *Madame de Trops*, with or without spectacles, to thwart or arrest the softer judgment.

Thus it was with the hero of this tale; his projects had been ruined so far, yet though depressed, and to a certain extent unhappy, he had time to gaze on the setting sun for one gorgeous beam to reawaken thoughts on the dreamed-of riches, and the moment came. Once more Georgie and himself were left alone in the parlour,

while Sir John and Louisa were, so to speak, gone "to look for their things." "Dearest Georgie, my own darling love—I must and will call you so—the moment of parting after such a day of pleasure is arrived. *That* moment comes upon me like the 'white storm' at sea on the slumbering mariner, reclined on the deck in calm and delusive sunshine. It overwhelms me; the thought of losing you is a cause of wreck to me. I little thought this morning when I arose free and unshackled by any previous affection, that night would find me a very slave. Say, darling," putting his arm round her waist and drawing her nearer, "tell me, do you love me in return, and will you be——" "mine," he would have said, but the waiter, without even knocking at the door, as all good waiters ought to do if their shoes do not squeak, thrust in his head, and exclaimed, "If you please, sir, have you got your coat?"

"No," Bill replied, after casting his eyes on the chair where he had left it. "No, no, no."

"Then, sir, if you please," exclaimed the imperturbably civil waiter, "it's just gone off by the Alligator, on the back of a young man in spectacles, and he's left a worn-out rag of a coat in place of it."

"Stop him!" roared Bill, his wrongs of the day rife on his irate mind, "stop the Crocodile, or whatever you call it. Oh! that I may catch the villain and consign him, goggles and all, to perdition!" and so saying he

rushed from the room, in spite of the assurances of the waiter that by that time the coach was three miles on its way to town.

No other opportunity occurred in which to commence the theme of love again ; Bill called on the fair possessor of rumoured wealth the next day, but she was confined to her room by indisposition. So, frantic with his fate, he was inclined to very hasty feelings, he came at once to the determination to be on the move from London, suggested by coatless hackney coachmen, and discarded cherry stones, and the very next day found him booked in the mail for Holyhead, fully resolved to make love to every female soul on earth, and to forget in the many the disappointment of the one.

Ireland offers a wide field, as the old song says, "to the sportsmen of the town, the virgin game in view," and as there is, to a London swell, something very fresh, taking, novel, and nice, in the accentuation of expression and manners of the girls of the Emerald Isle, whether they be wild Irish girls or not, a young hero like our friend Bill had better beware of the fate of the fly who would go so near to the treacle, that at last instead of his proboscis he dipped his wings into the luscious attraction, and could neither fly away, nor, by remaining still, divest himself of the fetters forged by his too rash and greedy desires. The voyage over, Kingstown received him, or rather he was received by a forest of whips and first fingers, held up in invitation

to their vehicles, by innumerable cabmen or jarvies. A livelier scene than this competition for a passenger and his effects is scarce to be imagined, while the wit of the broths-of-boys, at each other, and the smuttiness of their language in regard to themselves and their respective quadrupeds, would fill a folio in no time, but not with polite letters. A car having been selected, Bill then hurried through Westland Row, Lincoln Place, and part of Nassau and Kildare Streets, into Stephen's Green, where the open portal of the Shelbourne Hotel swallowed him up, as quickly as he intended to do by a well-dressed cutlet for his dinner.

During dinner our hero had an opportunity to think over his future proceedings. Time at his disposal, and sufficient money at command, his difficulty now lay in determining what to do. The noble and gallant last Lord O'Neill he had known when his lordship was colonel in the Coldstream Guards, and having known him, he did as everybody else must have done, he liked him for his manly qualities and extreme good nature, and somehow or other he felt a keen desire to see the country of the O'Neills, and the ground where they so often held their own against the imported Saxons, the fortress and the Castle of Antrim. With his usual inconsiderate promptitude our hero jumped to conclusions at once, and, with the waiter's assistance, he made out that if he started early on the following

morning he might reach the Massereene Arms Hotel at Antrim to dinner, revel in the scenery around, inspect the dark head in chiselled stone on the walls of Shanes' Castle, intimately connected with the fate of the O'Neills as that effigy was supposed to be, and fish in Lough Neagh, Pool and River; the only thing to be regretted would be the sweet society of some graceful girl. Alas! he took it into his head, that he should find in that wild district mere matter-of-fact heroines who discarded shoes and stockings, and who, if he courted them, and found a lip to return his salute, the blissful sound would awaken up the echoes of the woods with a smack that should leave no mystery in the air at least of love passages of that common-place description. It is dangerous to sit by a pretty girl and to assure yourself that you will not fall in love; in fact it is dangerous to make any hardened assertions or resolutions on so soft and gentle a subject; it is better to abandon yourself to the bliss of the hour, if bliss it should be, and with a deep sigh to let the helm of the progressing ship alone, and to give her sails to any light and changeful airs that may in variable perplexity be leading to heaven, or to whither none of us can tell. Our hero, then, was in search of adventure, and like a great many other young men, he scarce knew what it was that he desired, and when we say that scenery, wild Irish girls with red hands and legs, and fish, were the chief of his expectations, the most fastidious reader

will not think that his assumptions were superlatively grand.

It was late in the evening of a very beautiful summer's day, verging on the first approach of autumn, that our hero found himself wandering from the Massareene Arms Hotel to breathe the fresh air of night, and to see the sort of scenery that surrounded him.

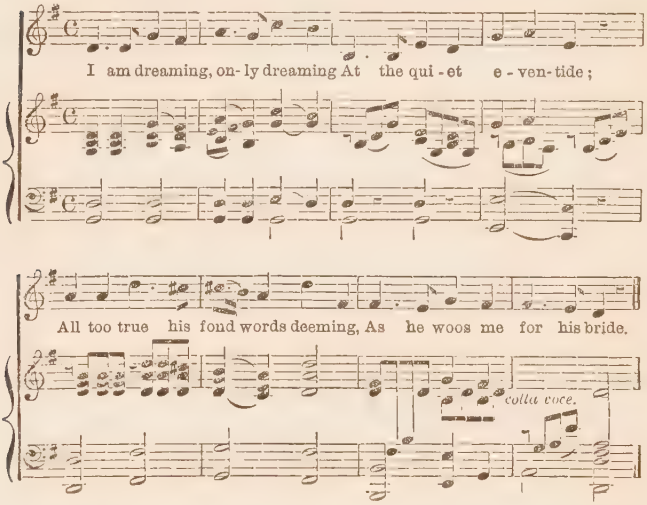
Summer lightning had long been playing all round the verge of the horizon, but now the sombre hue of the sky line brightened up, that which had looked like thunder clouds, panorama-like, slowly glided away, and the silvery crescent of a very bright moon cleared the sky and kissed each point of the landscape; alas, like other kisses, but to bless for a moment and to leave, and then as transiently to linger somewhere else. Oh, those silvery beams that, like the foot of beauty, glitter on the painted ball-room floor and dance to die too soon away! "The six-mile-water" under Antrim Castle, trembled like molten silver as the light air passed over the moon-lit ripple and gave it momentary life. So hushed, so bright, and so intensely sweet was this late hour of the August night, that our hero found within his heart a wild and contemplative longing to be wandering in the woods and by the water, and in this humour he continued on his way. Threading the woods, now dark now pierced by some solitary moonbeam, he found himself by the side of a rushing river, by deep pools, and at last on the banks of Lough Neagh. It was a lovely

spot to which he had inadvertently come, and shut in on the right and on the left by small isthmuses shooting out some little distance into the lake at his feet the shining sand that had been beaten into dust when winters' storms were high. Our hero had been walking a considerable time, and he felt tired, so to refresh himself and enjoy to his heart's content the beauty of the night, he lay down by the brink of the still water, and pillowed himself on the soft sand Lough Neagh had so generously placed at his disposal. In a very few minutes he fell asleep and dreamed of music and a soft sweet voice: not much was there to wonder at in that, but then by degrees his eyes really opened and there was no mistake, there had been, and *there was, music in the air,* and the sweet melancholy cadence of a low and rich contralto voice died away softly over the water, the site whence it came apparently only severed from him by one of the intervening promontories before mentioned.

Was he awake or was he not? did he hear a sweet voice, or was it but the cadence of some far-off harmony, mellowed by distance and not in itself an actual song? But hush! there it is again, the same voice, the same air, and apparently the second verse of it.

The song was real, as original as real, and therefore, as an historian gifted with the polite art of writing the notes of music, as well as taking notes for printing, I

give this second verse of the song precisely as it reached the ravished ears of our hero.*


I am dreaming, on- ly dreaming At the qui - et e - ven- tide;
All too true his fond words deeming, As he woos me for his bride.
colla voce.

"'As *he* woos me for his bride,'" whispered Bill to himself, "I must see who '*he*' is," and so saying he stole gently over the soft and noiseless margin of Lough Neagh, rounded the wooded promontory and found himself again in a romantic little bay where two streams seemed to join before they plunged into the Lough, suggesting a recurrence to the words of Moore,

> "Oh, there's not in the wide world a valley so sweet
> As the vale of Avoca where the wild waters meet,"

A single figure which, with a guitar in her hand, he saw

* Precisely as it reached the author's ears; the words and music are by "Marion."

seated on a fragment of a moss-covered rock, her white dress flowing gracefully around her, the large open sleeves of which left bare the most exquisitely turned arms as white as driven snow, at once absorbed his attention. Her long fair hair was down in wild but graceful confusion, the moonlight full upon her, and apparently clinging to each perfection of her form as if sent by Diana in all purity of love to do homage to her charms. Our hero was not the man to shrink from the romantic beauty of such a situation as the one in which he found himself so unexpectedly placed, so at the moment that their eyes met he advanced to her side; she neither moved nor spoke, so he sat himself down at her feet.

"Then," he said, "my ear did *not* deceive me, the charming songstress whose voice at once enslaved me I find as agreeable to the eye as she had been to the ear; and having said this much, I now await her pleasure to speak to me, or to bid me retire, for I would not intrude myself on a lovely girl against her sovereign will and pleasure for all the world could give me." As he concluded, she struck a chord on her guitar as if he had spoken in a sort of operatic guise, and then laughed in such a sweet and merry tone that Bill found himself on the eve of distraction. "Retire, oh! wandering knight, do you think that the shores of Lough Neagh, or those of the 'Six Mile Water' are so full of people that the society of a young gentleman

well versed in the art of good breeding can be so lightly dispensed with? You may stay by my side if you will till it is *my pleasure* to retire, but then you are to proceed directly to the place whence you came, and not attempt to accompany me even the length of my foot. Do you pledge yourself to obedience, or do you not?"

"I will, I do pledge myself to obey you, nor will I even stir in any direction whence you tell me to abstain, for to see, to hear, to obey any command uttered by your heavenly lip, is worth the dedication of a life." As Bill said this she turned her really calm and beautifully benignant eyes upon him, and after a pause held out her hand. He took it, and without any resistance from that snowy arm, he pressed the hand to his lips, and for the first real time in his life became devotedly, madly in love.

After remaining together till the little hours of the morning, she suddenly arose, and as she did so there was, or there seemed to have been, on the air the sound of a distant bell. "And are you leaving me?" Bill exclaimed, at the same time that she did, springing to his feet. "I stir not hence a yard in obedience to your command, but will you see me again to-morrow?"

"Yes," she said, with rather a melancholy smile lingering around her sweet lips; "you see that implicit obedience to me never goes unrewarded. I will be here at midnight to-morrow, and till then

rest content; seek not to find me wheresoever I may be, or whence I come, for if you were to do so it might lead to your never seeing me more. Adieu! know me, as you wish for a name, and think of me as—as—'Marion of the flowing tresses;' the name is familiar to these old ruins, and will serve as well as any other."

She kissed her hand to him and was lost to sight in the depth of the surrounding wood.

Day had begun to dawn before Bill, an altered man, had reached his inn. An idle, playful, light-headed, good-looking young fellow, he had crossed the water and landed at Dublin; now, at Antrim, through the intoxication of love's sweet teaching, or, in other words, in the passing of a midsummer night's dream, he was desperately in love, sobered down to the real worth of the best affection of man's heart, and weaned away from any of those lighter, wilder thoughts that are so apt to mar the most perfect treasure in the gift of heaven.

The next day passed in longing for the night; another night succeeded and the same moon came a little later, as if tired by her previous travels through the skies, and soon after eleven our hero found himself on the shores of Lough Neagh, and ere it was midnight he threw himself on the sand beside the moss-covered stone that looked so deserted then, and listened for the foot that had no fall, and for a time it did not come.

While thus watching a sudden drowsiness seized him; he might have had a moment's sleep but not longer, and when his eyes again opened the flowing robes and flowing tresses were on the little rock beside him, and, with a smile from those fairy lips, she sung to her guitar the cadence of the song he had heard before. Well, he knelt by her side and put his arm around her waist; their hands, their lips met in a long long kiss, and each seemed to feel that they were now bound by the closest ties of love, not through the trite conventionalities of the world, but by the spontaneous will of two loving hearts, whose affection had been moved so strangely, so wildly, so romantically, but so strongly, that it seemed not to be within the power of mortality to sever such gentle union.

Space does not permit me to follow the frequent greeting of the lovers by the meeting of the wild waters, nor to repeat their words so sweetly spoken, but something of late had seemed to cast a shadow over the lovely face beneath the flowing tresses, and now and then she fixed her eyes on Bill, while her mind seemed in some far-off contemplation. In addition to this, of late she had declined to sing the song which had from the first so enchanted him. One night, as they sat in one of their accustomed haunts, Marion said to him, "Have you ever remarked that statue of the Irish wolf-dog, as large as life, on the highest battlement of Antrim Castle? That noble creature, now but stone, had a

heart as brave and large as that of a lion : have you heard the legend still extant in this vicinity ?"

"Yes, my darling," replied her lover, "I have heard something of it, but truth to say, since I have been here I have had ears for little else than one sweet voice. Tell me, tell me all about it!"

"Well, then, I will tell it you, and don't keep playing with my long tresses as if you were never going to see them again. The legend is this. Marion Longford, the Lady Marion, strange is it not, that they should have given *one* the *same* name, was the daughter of Sir Roger Longford of Carrickfergus, but originally from the county of Devon, and with the accustomed fate of fair young brides when mated with the soldier warrior, shortly after their marriage she was often left alone to amuse herself in these wild scenes as best she could. When thus deserted by her gallant husband, forced to the field of battle as he so often was, for the O'Neils never left him long at rest, her young heart would stray back to scenes of childhood and of home, and lose itself in the gaieties of her former companions, and the more lively scenery of 'the Rock,' by 'island Magee' 'Lough Morrie,' and the 'green isle.' The 'Bawn,' and its great dull courtyard, for the castle of Antrim had not then been quite finished, were but sorry places for a young girl to find amusement in, and when she strolled far into the interminable and solitary woods, they were but a gloomy exchange for the still remembered and ever-

longed-for scenes of her earlier life. One beautiful afternoon, she walked from the north gate of the 'Bawn,' or fortress, to the green banks of the river, unattended, and in an attempt to shake off the loneliness, which in the absence of the gallant, the fond, but stern Sir Hugh, so often oppressed her. It was a perfect summer's day, when all the woods were clothed in their freshest verdure, the beech and birch in their brightest hue, and the mighty oaks dark in foliage enough to have hidden a thousand kings. Below the gnarled limbs of the overshadowing trees the large humble bee sought the moss, and blew his droning single-noted horn as if to lull the fairies to repose. In the sweet-scented air, and watching the unclouded blaze of living light in which the sun descended to illumine other realms, Marion remained dreaming the listless hours away, scarce aware that at a considerable distance from the fortress, night had closed around her and shut out with an impervious cloak the gaze of her attendants, even if they had known the direction in which she had wandered. Still, though night had shut in the extent of Antrim Bay had its charms in all the majesty of stillness, and there were no charms, no inducements to take the young bride away from her lonely contemplation of nature, to her still more lonely halls; so, listening to the river and its murmurs, as it leapt over barriers of sand to join the placid water of the lake, Marion remained till something which seemed like a low moan from some living thing seemed

to be close to the spot on which she stood. She turned to look whence the sound proceeded, the green reflected light of two large eyes met her view, and ere she had time to think a dark and monstrous mass sprang towards her, and, as if stricken to death with horror, she fell helplessly to the ground, and as she fell the huge dark animal, missing his intent, passed over her, closely followed in the spring by another shadow looming almost as large, and she became aware of a desperate combat close to her, waged by two creatures, who, in their efforts to kill each other passed over her prostrate form; she fainted away and for the time knew no more. How long I, that is Marion, remained in this unconscious state is not known, but when she came to herself, at her side and bleeding from many wounds lay a splendid Irish wolf-dog, while at a little distance outstretched and stiff, there was the dead body of an enormous wolf. Throwing her arms around her preserver's neck, she kissed his ample forehead, looked into his bright and faithful eyes, and received in return caresses from the noble dog, who licked her hands, and though, still panting from previous exertion in her service, every now and then cast an angry glance on the dead foe, as if to reassure himself that his victory had been certain. Marion and the wolf-dog then became inseparable, and it was some time before the dog recovered from the severe laceration of one of his legs inflicted by the wolf, but no sooner had he recovered

than he was seen to trot slowly away in the direction of Massareene Abbey, when, as he did not return, Marion became almost broken-hearted at his loss. Summer and autumn had at length succumbed to the severities of an Irish winter, when on a dark night, one of those sudden and peculiar squalls so frequent on Lough Neagh arose, accompanied by a deluge of driving rain, lashing the waters of the lake to madness, and driving the billows formed by river and by lough against the castle walls to the immolation of any other sound. As night advanced, though the wind still roared through the forests, the most impenetrable darkness set in, and every ear in Antrim Castle listened to the storm, and the warders hugged themselves in sheltered safety.

"'Hark!—above the roaring of the forest, louder yet than storm and raging water; listen! there it is again—'tis he, 'tis he!' almost shrieked the Lady Marion, 'tis the voice of my own loved wolf-dog, he bays of danger to us all. Now Heaven save us from our foes. Sir Hugh, Sir Hugh, it is my own dog's voice, I beseech you be on guard.'

"Thus warned, the garrison fired their turf and bog-wood beacon, which enabled them to discern a dark mass of armed men advancing to the walls. Match-lock and culverin soon dispersed the foe, for they had only hoped to carry the castle by surprise. The besiegers returned the fire, but attempted no escalade.

Under cover of a few parting shots, the enemy

retired, but as their last shot rang through the murky air a cry of pain was heard, silence then reigned over the scene, and towards morning the storm subsided. In the grey dawn the warders sallied forth on a round of inspection, when on passing the great entrance gate, several flattened bullets lay on the flagstone way, and there was a train of blood; in a little lonely nook close by lay stretched in the cold rigidity of death the noble wolf-dog, whose mysteriously interposing bay had warned the Lady Marion, Sir Hugh, and their retainers, of the coming danger. In gratitude for the services of this dear noble thing, I, that is we, at least, they," continued the Lady Marion, "had a statue of the wolf-dog in carved stone, and it was placed on the highest battlements of the castle. The dog was of a very rare, renowned, and sagacious breed, kept by the monks of Massareene Abbey, to whom he had returned after saving the life of the heroine of this tale. Hush! was not that a bell, a distant bell?" continued the beautiful tale teller; "at least, distant it would seem to you. 'Tis there again; oh, mercy! save me; there it is and thrice repeated; stir not on your life, move not for the love you bear me—adieu, adieu!" While thus saying, Marion arose and the waving of her white dress, and long and beautiful flowing hair, were soon lost in the deep shadows of the forest into which she so hastily plunged. Our hero sat for a time absorbed in thought, his eyes wandering from the mossy

rock, on which Marion had so lately rested, to the dark spot which, in the deep impervious shadow of night, had seemed to overwhelm or swallow up the light of his life, the love of his very existence, and then, rising to his feet with the longing hope of a to-morrow night, the hero of this tale turned his steps to the hotel.

To-morrow, aye, to-morrow! "What will to-morrow bring, who can tell?" Many a sunrise has given promise of a beautiful day, and many a sunset the same of the happiest weather, and yet though those indications are gathered from heaven, how often are they false and untrustworthy in regard to the hopes of man.

On the following morning, and at an early hour, there was an unusual commotion at the Massareene Hotel. People whispered together, and trod on tiptoe to make no noise, straw was scattered on the approaches to dim the roll of wheels and feet of horses, and the reply to inquiries as to the why and wherefore was, "the young gentleman who came from Dublin is in a brain fever and not expected to survive."

Youth and constitution, attention and care, however, did recover our hero from this strange and sudden attack; wasted in form, and worn and pallid in feature, he was now able to walk forth but not without attendance. Hour by hour his strength improved, till at last he was free to do as he pleased, and the first midnight hour after his recovery found him by the Lough, seated

on the sand, and leaning on that little moss-covered fragment of rock as if on the temple of his heart's best hope. Night after night he was there. To the midnight air he murmured entreaties and prayers that she would return: not a leaf stirred but his eyes turned in its direction in the loving hope to see the wave of that white and flowing dress, and yet she came not and he never saw her more.

Well, the hero of this tale returned to England, if not a light-hearted happy man, still a better man as regarded the power to estimate the deep diapason of the soul's sweet hymn of love. He no longer viewed the female heart as a field for amusement, nor as a trifle to be lightly taken up, and as lightly thrown away. He had seen a creature whose touch was bliss and with whom he could have been in love as long as life had lasted. She was lost to him now, and severed *perhaps* for ever—then let the heart of man that *has known* the real happiness of life, concentrated as it is alone in the gift of woman, profit by knowledge thus obtained, and however crossed his path, let him still live to deserve an angel's visit in robes of snowy whiteness and with flowing hair.

THE END.

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